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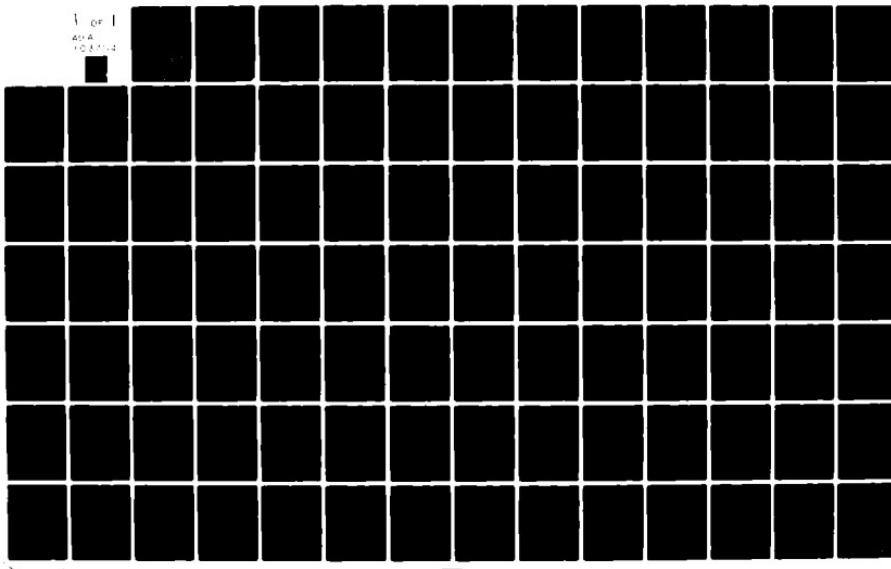
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CHOICES FOR COALITION-BUILDING:
The Soviet Presence in Asia and American Policy Alternatives

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Richard H. Solomon

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**The Rand Corporation
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CHOICES FOR COALITION-BUILDING:

The Soviet Presence in Asia and American Policy Alternatives

SUMMARY

The Military Character of the Soviet Presence in Asia

Since World War II, Asia has been a region of shifting alignments in the on-going rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States. The major assumption underlying this analysis is that the worldwide growth of Soviet military power and its projection into Asia has been--and will continue to be--the primary factor shaping the evolving pattern of international alignments in the region.

Moscow has very limited economic influence in Asia, and its political access is restricted to countries such as Vietnam which fear pressures from China. Thus, military resources are the predominant form of Soviet influence in the region.

Soviet Efforts to Establish a Great Power Condominium

Soviet policy toward Asia, since the period of the German-Japanese "axis," has been designed to prevent a two-front challenge to the security of the USSR in the form of an alliance between a major western power and an industrializing Asian state. Moscow has attempted to build a condominium of countries, of which it would be the major power, to protect its Asian frontier. This was first attempted in the 1950s through the alliance with China in the context of the international communist movement. In the late 1960s, when the Sino-Soviet alliance had been transformed into a military confrontation, Moscow proposed--to little effect--the formation of an "Asian Collective Security" grouping designed to isolate the Chinese.

The Soviets have proposed to the United States, on several occasions since the early 1960s, some form of collusion over developments in Asia, primarily in order to retard the growth of Chinese power and influence. These proposals have been rejected repeatedly by the United States. The U.S. and USSR cannot negotiate a deal or bilateral arrangement on future alignments and security relationships in Asia. A condominium of the major powers would gain no general acceptance; and the growing Soviet military presence in Asia is likely to be highly unsettling to the maintenance of a loose balance of relations among the major and regional states. The trend in the 1980s is likely to be toward increasing regional polarization along the faultline of the Sino-Soviet feud and Soviet-American competition.

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The Building of Rival Anti-Chinese and "Anti-Hegemony" Coalitions

Since the mid-1970s Moscow has attempted to build a political coalition and a related military base structure designed to contain China and counter the American military presence in Asia. This coalition is based on bilateral security ties with Mongolia, Vietnam, India, Afghanistan, South Yemen, and Ethiopia.

In reaction to Moscow's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the Soviet military buildup along the Sino-Soviet frontier, China moved during the 1970s to establish a security relationship with the United States. Peking seeks to form an "anti-hegemony" united front composed of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Japan, the United States, and the NATO countries, as well as other states friendly to the U.S. such as members of the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Pakistan, and Egypt.

In the 1980s Moscow will seek to forestall the consolidation of this coalition, by trying to gain greater influence in Indonesia (which fears a growing Chinese presence in Southeast Asia), and by enticing the Japanese to invest in the development of the natural resources of the Soviet Far East. The Soviets will also attempt to pull North Korea to their side in the Sino-Soviet feud, probably by trying to influence a leadership succession struggle in Pyongyang. They will strengthen their military assets and base structure in Asia so as to neutralize the American military presence, intimidate the Chinese and Japanese, and weaken America's ties to its allies. Moscow will seek to create a sense of insecurity along the sea and air lines of communication by which the U.S. would reinforce its allies in time of war, and through which Japan and other countries gain access to Middle Eastern oil and other natural resources, and promote trade.

America's Asia Policy in the 1980s

An effective American Asia policy must be designed to strengthen ties to its traditional allies--Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Australia, and New Zealand--and to develop the capability of mobilizing a broader coalition of states in response to evidence of greater Soviet aggressiveness. The challenge to the U.S. is to do this without gratuitously provoking Moscow's fears of encirclement and generating an action-reaction cycle of Soviet and American policy initiatives which would compound the trend toward regional polarization.

While the particular strengths of America's relations with Asia are its economic vitality and political/cultural ties to the various countries of the region, U.S. policy regarding the Soviet presence must

operate at three very different levels of activity:

The U.S. Military Presence. American strategic as well as conventional military forces must be strengthened so as to reduce present doubts among allies and friendly states about our willingness and ability to deter the Soviets and respond to regional military challenges. Theater nuclear and conventional air and naval forces in Asia (and in other regions of relevance to the security of East Asia, such as South and Southwest Asia, and the Middle East) must be maintained in order to secure sea and air lines of communication and counter direct Soviet challenges (such as Moscow's garrisoning of Japan's northern territories) or proxy threats (as through Vietnamese actions in Indochina). The U.S. must also demonstrate greater responsiveness to the security needs of its allies through military sales and assistance programs, and by maintaining working relations with regional military elites through various training programs and on-going consultations.

Collaboration with Allies and Friends. There is a clear consensus that in the 1980s the U.S.-Japan security relationship must be transformed into a functioning military and political alliance which reflects the greater equality among the partners as well as the special strengths and limitations affecting each of them. Economic tensions must be managed so as to minimize political strains in the relationship. The U.S. must also continue to encourage the growth of the ASEAN coalition in both political and economic terms, and potentially in security matters as well--especially if the Vietnamese and Soviet military threats to Southeast Asia continue to increase.

There is considerable division of opinion in the U.S. over the development of a security relationship with China. The bilateral U.S.-PRC tie must be strengthened in political, social, and economic areas of activity to reinforce the strategic flexibility accorded both countries in the 1970s by the full normalization of relations. Security cooperation among the two powers, initiated in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1980, however, should evolve "step by step" in response to further Soviet challenges to the security of the U.S. and the PRC. Moscow must come to see that its actions will have some influence on the pace and direction in which Sino-American security cooperation evolves; yet the Chinese must also find the U.S. responsive to their needs for economic and defense modernization. American China policy must thus be short of a gratuitous provocation to the Soviet Union, yet capable of responding to security challenges from Moscow and sensitive to PRC modernization requirements.

Direct Soviet-American Dealings in Asia. Cooperative U.S.-Soviet dealings in Asia will be limited by the fact that Moscow's presence in the region is largely military in character, and its objectives are so

competitive with American purposes. Yet minimizing the possibilities of direct confrontations which hold the risk of military conflict will remain an important shared interest. Thus, Washington and Moscow must maintain a dialogue on Asian issues; and there may be prospects for tacit or explicit arms control arrangements either in the context of a possible SALT III round, or over regional problems such as the military balance on the Korean Peninsula.

In any such discussions with the Soviets, however, the U.S. must be sensitive to the concerns of friendly and allied states that their interests not be adversely affected by such talks, and to past Soviet efforts to draw the U.S. into at least the appearance of a great power condominium over the affairs of the region. Close American consultation with formal or implicit allies will be important to minimizing the possibly corrosive effects of U.S.-Soviet discussions.

American involvement in the economic development of the Soviet Far East must similarly be sensitive to the interests of countries like Japan and China which have territorial conflicts or security concerns with the USSR. Investment and technology transfers should be linked to the overall state of U.S.-Soviet relations and Moscow's actions in Asia.

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Apart from wanting to acknowledge the intellectual stimulation provided by the other contributors to this volume, who participated in a Council on Foreign Relations study group in the fall of 1979, the author wishes to express appreciation to Anna S. Ford and Lilita Dzirkals for research assistance, and to the following colleagues for critical evaluations of earlier drafts of this analysis: Michael H. Armacost, Harry Gelman, Arnold L. Horelick, William G. Hyland, Roderick MacFarquhar, Lucian W. Pye, Alan D. Romberg, Robert A. Scalapino, Strobe Talbott, and Donald S. Zagoria.

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CHOICES FOR COALITION-BUILDING:

The Soviet Presence in Asia and American Policy Alternatives

Richard H. Solomon*

I. INTRODUCTION

Since World War II Asia has been a region of shifting alignments in the on-going global rivalry between the Soviet Union and United States. In Europe the pattern of alliances between East and West, between the NATO states and the Warsaw Pact, has remained relatively stable for more than thirty years; and until recently much of the developing world, from West Asia and the Middle East through Africa and Latin America, has been at the margins of Soviet-American competition. In Asia, however, the post-war years have been characterized by major periodic alterations in the pattern of great power relationships as they affect the Soviet-American competition. The Sino-Soviet alliance of the 1950s gave way to political feuding in the 1960s, and a military confrontation in the 1970s. China's unsuccessful efforts of the 1960s to organize a third international center around the "newly emerging forces" of the developing world, symbolized by Indonesia's Sukarno, gave way in the 1970s to openings toward the non-communist states of Japan, the United States, and Western Europe as Peking sought protection against Soviet political and military pressures and access to advanced technology and development capital. Concurrent with these changes has been India's

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shift from balanced relations between East and West in the 1950s to near-alignment with the Soviet Union in the 1970s.

The primary forces animating these changes in relationships among the major powers, and regional developments related to them, have been the state of Sino-Soviet relations and the Soviet-American competition. The bipolar character of regional alignments in the 1950s reflected the Sino-Soviet alliance and Soviet-American Cold War. The fluidity of the subsequent decade was stimulated by the eruption of the Moscow-Peking feud. And the 1970s brought to Asia a renewed trend toward polarization along the faultline of the Sino-Soviet military confrontation, reinforced by the breakdown of Soviet-American detente at mid-decade.

The 1980s presents the United States, the Soviet Union, and the major and minor states of Asia with choices about how far to press this new polarization. How far should they proceed in building coalitions or formal alliances with which to contain the influence of adversaries and their allies? Is it possible to attain a stable balance of relationships among the the major powers; or will continuing rivalry among the Soviet Union on the one hand, and China, Japan, and the United States on the other, drive Asia again toward confrontation?

The major assumption underlying this analysis is that the worldwide growth of Soviet military power, and its projection into Asia, is the primary factor shaping the emerging pattern of alignments in the region. This growth of Soviet military resources is ominous, yet ambiguous in purpose. Does Moscow intend to engage in coercive diplomacy through military pressures to gain the influence it lacks because of its modest political and economic ties to Asia? Will the Soviets seek to work out

a great power "deal" on the region--as they have proposed to the United States in various forums since the late 1960s--in order to guarantee their access and inhibit the formation of a coalition of major and regional states against them?

This analysis concludes that it is highly unlikely that the great powers can negotiate an understanding about future alignments in Asia. A condominium of the major states would gain no general acceptance, just as "spheres of influence" politics has been outdated by the global reach of Soviet and American power and the increasing fluidity of the international system. Moreover, the predominantly military character of the Soviet presence is likely to be unsettling rather than stabilizing, especially as Moscow seeks to strengthen its position in Asia and related regions such as the Middle East by involving itself in local disputes and political instabilities in an effort to secure new allies.

As a consequence, the challenge to the United States in formulating an Asia policy is to respond to the Soviet Union's growing involvement by maintaining a stabilizing presence that will protect our own interests and those of our allies. We must establish the capability to mobilize a countervailing coalition in response to Soviet pressures, yet to do so without gratuitously provoking Moscow's concerns about "encirclement." The particular dilemma facing American policymakers in the coming decade is to prevent an action-reaction cycle of Soviet and American initiatives in Asia (as elsewhere) that would unnecessarily polarize the region and increase the risks of military confrontation.

This study is divided into two parts. The first section reviews the evolution of the Soviet Union's involvement in Asia in the years

since World War II in order to set the context for the relationships and rivalries of the 1980s. The second part identifies the major characteristics of the contemporary Soviet presence in Asia, and develops a set of perspectives on American policy alternatives toward the region and the Soviet Union's involvement in it.

II. KREMLIN STRATEGIES FOR SECURING THE USSR'S ASIAN FRONTIER

Contemporary Soviet concerns about the security of the USSR's Asian frontier are rooted in the history of the Mongol invasion of Russia in the 12th and 13th centuries and the more recent experience in the 1900s of major Asian countries, such as Japan and China, allying themselves with imperial states of the West. While the colonial European powers who gained spheres of influence in China during the 19th century did not constitute a direct military threat in Asia to Tsarist Russia, Moscow's defeat at the hands of the Japanese imperial navy in 1905 presented a more immediate challenge to Russian security.

Soviet fears of a two-front military threat were first stimulated by Western interventions against the newly founded Bolshevik state at Archangel and Vladivostok in 1919, and then fully realized in the German-Japanese "axis" of the 1940s. In the 20th Century Moscow's Asian security problem has been to prevent a modernizing Asian country from allying itself with a hostile power of the West to constitute a two-front challenge to the Soviet Union.

A UNITED FRONT OF SOCIALIST AND ANTI-COLONIAL STATES

The post-World War II era in Asia began positively for the Soviet Union. Moscow's establishment in late 1949 of an alliance with the newly victorious Chinese Communists, and the concomitant diminution of Western influence in China and the decolonized states of the region, seemed to establish a golden age for Soviet interests. The eastern frontier of the USSR was secured through the alliance with China; and Moscow's influence was projected widely through vigorous communist

movements in North Korea, Malaya, and Indochina, and anti-colonial governments in Burma, Indonesia, and India.

Through these developments, and in combination with prior Soviet initiatives in Eastern Europe, Moscow established a two-front security challenge to the United States. The Truman and Eisenhower administrations responded by establishing the NATO alliance in Europe, CENTO in the Middle East, and a series of bilateral and multilateral security treaties in Asia: with the Philippines (1952), the Republic of Korea (1954), the Republic of China on Taiwan (1954), Japan (1960), the ANZUS states (Australia and New Zealand) in 1951, and the SEATO treaty of 1955 with Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, and European allies with interests in Asia.

Moscow's golden age was short-lived, however. Chinese opposition to the Soviet Union playing a major role in Asia was first evident in Peking's lack of support for Soviet participation in the 1955 Bandung Conference of Asian and African states, and later fully expressed in the Sino-Soviet polemics of the 1960s. Peking openly resisted Moscow's participation in the Second African-Asian Conference of 1964 on the grounds that the USSR was not an Asian country.^[1] The concurrent

[1] See "Statement of the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Soviet Government's Statement Concerning the Preparatory Meeting for the Second Asian-African Conference," Peking Review, No. 23, June 5, 1964, p. 7.

Analysts of Sino-Soviet relations have noted the origins of Peking's challenge to Soviet influence in Asia and other Third World areas in statements by Mao Zedong's colleague (only later to be purged) Liu Shaoqi. In 1946 Liu told Anna Louise Strong that Mao had developed an Asiatic form of Marxism that would influence other developing countries in Asia, a perspective Liu repeated in November, 1949 at a Trade Union Conference of Asian and Australasian Countries in Peking. See Donald S. Zagoria, The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-1961 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), pp. 14-15.

breakdown of the Moscow-Peking security relationship--resulting from Chinese and Soviet differences over the PRC's fledgling nuclear weapons program, defense and foreign policies, and Peking's initiative in the Taiwan Strait crisis of 1958--led Moscow to seek a combination of political and military measures to contain the expansion of Chinese influence in Asia.

This effort began in the mid-1950s with the efforts of Khrushchev and Bulganin to develop ties with India, Burma, and Ondonesia. And during the last years of the Khrushchev era, the Soviet leadership sought to use the signing of a limited nuclear test ban treaty with the United States in 1963 to build political pressures against the Chinese and their anticipated detonation of nuclear weapons.[2] And prior to the first explosion of a Chinese atomic bomb in 1964, American and Soviet leaders even mused about the possibility of joint or tacitly coordinated Soviet-American military action against China's nuclear facilities.[3]

A MILITARY BUILDUP AND ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY

Khrushchev's successors, while less flamboyant and impulsive than the purged Soviet leader, took the Chinese challenge no less seriously. After failing to reestablish a positive relationship with the Chinese following Khrushchev's ouster, Brezhnev and Kosygin initiated a military buildup along the Sino-Soviet frontier in 1965 that saw Russian divisions increase over a decade from an initial deployment of 17 to more than 45 (including three stationed in the Mongolian People's

[2] Theodore C. Sorensen, Kennedy (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 724-725; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1956), p. 915.

[3] See Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 904.

Republic). And while the USSR's buildup against China stabilized numerically by the late 1970s, continuing qualitative improvements in weaponry and associated equipment are heightening the combat capabilities of these forces.[4] (At the same time, Moscow continues to increase its air and naval deployments in the Soviet Far East targeted on Japan and U.S. forces in Asia).

Despite the venom in Chinese political attacks on the United States during the 1960s, American leaders came to warn Soviet leaders of the adverse consequences of military action against the Chinese, much as they had rejected Chiang Kai-shek's appeals for American support of Taiwan-based military action against the south China coast during 1962-63 at the time of the collapse of Peking's "Great Leap Forward." [5] Moscow, however, has sought to deal with what it views as a growing Chinese political and military challenge through its own military deployments along the Sino-Soviet frontier, reinforced by the creation of a political coalition which will isolate Peking within the international communist movement, in the Third World, and in Asia. As part of this effort, in 1969--following the first of a series of serious military clashes along the Sino-Soviet frontier--Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Brezhnev called for the establishment of a "system of collective security" in Asia as an alternative to balance of power politics, and as a replacement for "existing military-political

[4] See The Military Balance, 1979-1980 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1979), p. 10.

[5] For the Kennedy administration's position, see Sorensen, Kennedy, pp. 661-662; for the Nixon administration's position, see Henry A. Kissinger, White House Years (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), pp. 183-186.

groupings."^[6] This vague concept was read by almost all observers, however, as constituting the basis for a new, anti-China coalition.^[7]

Despite widespread distrust of Chinese intentions throughout the region, the Soviets found virtually no takers for their proposal. Would-be non-aligned states like India and Indonesia, while viewing China as their major security challenge, failed to endorse the Brezhnev initiative, as did socialist states such as North Vietnam and North Korea who sought to balance themselves between the contending Chinese and Russians. Only the Mongolian People's Republic and Iran spoke out in favor of the idea.^[8]

Brezhnev's call for the formation of an Asian Collective Security system reinforced the impact of related developments in Sino-Soviet relations and Soviet foreign policy, impelling China's leaders to undertake their third major departure in foreign policy since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949--an opening to the West. Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai read Brezhnev's proposal as part of the Soviet leader's earlier assertion that "proletarian internationalism" justified "support for progressive forces in all countries," a policy of limited sovereignty for socialist states that was used to rationalize the Soviet military intervention into

[6] L. I. Brezhnev, "For Strengthening the Solidarity of Communists, for a New Upswing in the Anti-Imperialist Struggle" (June 7, 1969), as translated in Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Vol. XXI, No. 23 (July 2, 1969), p. 16.

[7] See Bernard Gwertzman, "Moscow May Seek Asian Defense Pact," New York Times, June 14, 1969; and Kissinger, White House Years, pp. 178, 180.

[8] Arnold L. Horelick, The Soviet Union's "Asian Collective Security" Proposal: A Club in Search of Members (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, March, 1974), P-5195.

Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1968.[9] The Sino-Soviet border clashes of the following year, whatever their origin, dramatized to the Chinese the significance of the Soviet military buildup along their northern frontier initiated four years earlier.[10] They signaled to the world that the Moscow-Peking feud had passed beyond its political origins to become a direct and immediate threat to China's security.

THE EVOLUTION OF AN "ANTI-HEGEMONY" COUNTER-COALITION, AND MOSCOW'S WEST ASIAN "BREAKOUT"

China's awareness of its vulnerability before a growing and increasingly assertive Soviet military presence in Asia stimulated PRC leaders in the 1970s to repair their country's tenuous links to the international community. These ties had been strained by the years of Cultural Revolution turmoil, during which Peking had recalled all but one of its ambassadors stationed abroad. During the decade Zhou Enlai's artful diplomacy achieved China's long-resisted admission to the United Nations, the establishment of diplomatic relations with the states of Western Europe, and ultimately the normalization of relations with Japan and the United States. The objective of this reactivated Chinese foreign policy was to build a coalition of states united on the theme of "anti-hegemony," opposed to Soviet expansionism and Moscow's efforts to

[9] See Brezhnev's speech to the Fifth Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party (November 12, 1968), as translated in Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Vol. XX, No. 46, pp. 3-5; also the Brezhnev speech cited in footnote 7 above.

[10] For differing interpretations of the origins of the Sino-Soviet border clashes of 1969, see: Roger G. Brown, "Chinese Politics and American Foreign Policy: A New Look at the Triangle," Foreign Policy, No. 23, Summer 1976, pp. 3-23; and Thomas W. Robinson, "The Sino-Soviet Border Dispute: Background, Development, and the March 1969 Clashes," American Political Science Review, Vol. LXVI, No. 4, December 1972, pp. 1175-1202.

create collective security arrangements in Asia and bilateral defense relationships throughout the Third World.

Moscow's reaction to the first signs of this major shift in PRC foreign policy was to accelerate efforts in the early 1970s to reduce tensions with the United States through the diplomacy of detente--even as programs to modernize and expand strategic and conventional weaponry proceeded apace. For the first half of the decade the Soviets competed with the Chinese to improve relations with the U.S. and Europe, a situation that in the period 1971-73 facilitated the negotiation of agreements on Berlin, the prevention of accidental nuclear war, and the first strategic arms limitation treaty.[11]

During the brief years of detente, the Soviets first attempted to preclude and then to draw the U.S. away from its formative relationship with the Chinese and establish the appearance, if not the reality, of a Soviet-American condominium in global affairs. Soviet proposals for the treaty on the prevention of nuclear war initially included language that would have justified joint Soviet-American military action against China in the event of some Chinese provocation--an implication of the agreement repeatedly rejected by the U.S.[12] And senior Soviet leaders sought to convince the Nixon and Ford administrations that detente could be sustained only on the basis of an end to the process of normalizing Sino-American relations.[13]

[11] Kissinger, White House Years, pp. 766, 835-840.

[12] Ibid., pp. 545, 548-550, 554, 708, 1146, 1152, 1208.

[13] Ibid., p. 1251; and Richard M. Nixon, RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1978), p. 1030.

By the mid-1970s the Soviet leadership seems to have reached the conclusion that detente was not moving events in a direction favorable to Soviet interests.[14] This reassessment seems to have been based on a combination of Soviet unhappiness with the limited economic payoffs of the new relationship with the U.S. (as a result of Congressional resistance to trade concessions for the USSR embodied in the Jackson-Vanik and Stevenson amendments), distrust of American purposes in its Middle East diplomacy, and the slowly evolving China connection. This shift in policy probably also reflected a feeling in Moscow that, in view of the uncertain benefits of detente, Soviet interests could be pursued most effectively by invoking the USSR's growing military capabilities, through direct and assertive efforts to establish clients in the Third World to counter Western and Chinese influence. It may be that in view of Moscow's limited capabilities for projecting the influence of the USSR abroad through political and economic means, the only reliable instrument of foreign policy is seen to be the use of military assets: arms sales, military assistance, support of proxy military interventions or, in the extreme, the direct use of Soviet armed forces.

In any event, Soviet actions of the latter part of the decade reflected a decision to grasp at new opportunities to extend the influence of the USSR in the developing world, whatever the impact on the still tenuous foundation of detente with the West. Beginning in 1975 Moscow embarked on a series of initiatives through direct military

[14] This interpretation is developed at length in William G. Hyland, Soviet-American Relations (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, 1981).

action and by way of assistance to Cuban, East German, and Vietnamese proxies--in Angola, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Yemen, Nicaragua, Indochina, and Afghanistan--that brought the process of detente to a standstill and in reaction accelerated the repolarization of Asia.

The latter half of the 1970s can be seen, in retrospect, as a period in which the Soviets resorted to various military initiatives to counter what they saw as an evolving anti-Soviet coalition of China, Japan, the United States, and Western Europe. The impact of their actions, however, was to accelerate the process of coalescence, speeding the full normalization of Peking's relations with Japan and the United States and--after their invasion of Afghanistan--justifying the evolution of Sino-American relations into areas of low-level defense cooperation. To be sure, such developments were implicit in the events of the early 1970s; but Soviet actions raised the sense of direct military threat from the USSR and accelerated political initiatives that otherwise might have taken many more years to play out, if they would have been realized at all.

Much of the Soviet action during the period 1975-1979 took place in Africa and the Persian Gulf: the intervention, along with Cuban proxies, in the Angolan civil war; involvement in the Ethiopian Marxist revolution against Emperor Haile Selassie in 1977, the shift of support from Somalia to Ethiopia and the development of port facilities at Massawa and Dahlak; involvement in South Yemen and the development of naval and air facilities at Aden and on the island of Socotra; and the invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979.

These initiatives did much to degrade confidence in Soviet intentions and enhanced the American political reaction against detente. They also enhanced public awareness of the linkage between the economic security of Western Europe, Japan, and other industrializing states of East Asia and access to Middle Eastern energy supplies. Henceforth the security of Asia could not be reckoned in regional terms alone. An ability to defend the sea lanes and maintain access to distant oil resources would be critical to a sense of confidence in the future. Security planning was increasingly globalized.

By 1978, however, events began to have a more direct impact on alignments in East Asia. In the spring, Sino-Japanese negotiations over a peace and friendship treaty, which had languished for several years following normalization of diplomatic relations in 1972, gained renewed momentum. Despite Soviet threats about the effect on Russo-Japanese relations of Tokyo signing a treaty with China containing an "anti-hegemony" clause, the negotiations were successfully concluded during the summer. Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping traveled to Tokyo in September for the official signing ceremony. He carried warnings about the Soviet threat to world peace that rendered Japanese denials that the "anti-hegemony" clause of the treaty was specifically directed against the Soviet Union ritualistic and implausible.

During the spring and summer of that same year Sino-Vietnamese tensions accelerated dramatically in the wake of border clashes along the Vietnamese-Cambodian frontier initiated by the brutal and xenophobic Pol Pot government of "Kampuchea"--a government closely tied to the Chinese. Further tensions resulted from Hanoi's forced expulsion of

hundreds of thousands of ethnic Chinese, either over Vietnam's northern border into the PRC or out to sea as "boat people," burdening the states of Southeast Asia with a flood of refugees. In response, the Chinese acted in a manner reminiscent of Soviet pressures against the PRC in 1960: they suddenly cut off all economic assistance to the Vietnamese.

The Soviets wasted little time in involving themselves in the feud, initially by admitting the Vietnamese to COMECON (the Moscow-based Council of Mutual Economic Assistance) in the record time of two days, and by accelerating deliveries of military equipment to Hanoi. In the fall--as Vietnamese troops prepared to invade Kampuchea--Moscow and Hanoi signed a treaty of peace and friendship that included the obligation to consult in the event of threats to the security of either party. And Russian ships and aircraft began appearing regularly at the American-built naval and air facilities at Danang and Cam Ranh Bay.

During this same period the Sino-American normalization negotiations, which had been desultory during the first years of the Carter administration, took on new life. Following the visit to Peking of the President's national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski in May 1978, China expressed heightened interest in acquiring American scientific training and industrial technology. And very likely in anticipation of military conflict with the Vietnamese over Kampuchea, Peking helped to accelerate the negotiations over a normalization agreement in the fall. Just ten days before Vietnamese troops crossed the border into Kampuchea, on December 25, Premier Hua Guofeng and President Carter announced an agreement to complete the normalization of U.S.-PRC relations by January 1st, 1979. And the now-peripetetic Deng

Xiaoping visited Washington in late January to celebrate normalization, amidst warnings that China would have to "teach the Vietnamese a lesson" for their military action against the Pol Pot government.

The Chinese must have calculated that full normalization with Washington, in the context of their increasingly violent feud with Vietnam, gave them some added margin of protection against Soviet pressures should they take military action against Hanoi--which they were to initiate within a month of Deng's return to Peking. While the Russians maintained a small naval presence in the South China Sea during the month-long border war, they did not directly enter the fray or take countermeasures along China's northern frontier. Subsequent assessments of the conflict either lauded the Soviets for their restraint or, conversely, questioned their reliability as an ally; yet all evaluations raised public awareness of the degree to which the conflicts of the great powers were linked to the feuds of the region.

These events in Indochina were paralleled by other Soviet military moves in Northeast Asia. Moscow's troop buildup along the Sino-Soviet frontier during the decade 1965-75 was oriented primarily against the Chinese--involving the deployment of motorized rifle and tank divisions, tactical air units, and intermediate- or short-range nuclear-capable missiles. Beginning in mid-decade, however, Soviet military capabilities in Asia were expanded to pose an increased threat to American and Japanese naval and air forces. The Soviet Far East Fleet, headquartered at Vladivostok, was significantly expanded, as dramatized by the deployment of the anti-submarine cruiser Minsk and the amphibious assault ship Ivan Rogov to the region in 1979. SS-20 intermediate range

missiles were deployed to the Soviet Far East, raising the level of theater nuclear threat to American bases in Asia. The stationing of the anti-ship version of the Tu-26 "Backfire" bomber and MiG-25 "Foxbat" interceptors in the Soviet Far East heightened the threat of long-range satellite-directed air attack on ships of the U.S. Seventh Fleet and aircraft of the strategic airlift. And beginning in the fall of 1978, Soviet ground forces began to garrison the contested "northern islands" off Japan's Hokkaido, raising the threat of airborne and amphibious attack on the northernmost home island across the narrow Soya and Nemuro Straits.

COPING WITH THE ASIAN FRONT OF A MULTIFRONT STRATEGIC CHALLENGE

As the 1980s begin, Moscow faces an increasingly complex security problem in East Asia. Enduring Soviet fears of a multifront strategic challenge seem to be acquiring reality in a coalition of China, Japan, the United States, and American allies in Southeast Asia and Western Europe. The Soviet Far East is no longer buffered by a friendly China, but confronted with a PRC and Japan increasingly linked to the west by economic, political, and military ties. In southeast Asia, the Vietnamese are allies--caught as they are between Chinese military pressures and the political opposition of the ASEAN states (two of which--the Philippines and Thailand--are directly allied to the U.S.); yet Soviet political influence in the region is minimal, with its potential for growth limited to those countries--Indonesia and Malaysia--fearful of Peking's possible influence over large ethnic Chinese minorities.

Only in West Asia and the Middle East does the situation show greater promise for Soviet interests, even if new opportunities are fraught with risk and uncertainty. India, concerned about China's growing ties to the West, becomes more actively supportive of Soviet diplomacy and a major recipient of Moscow's military assistance.[15] Afghanistan is likely to be a base for more active Soviet involvement in Southwest Asia and the Persian Gulf, despite continuing political instability and insecurity within the country, and the international political costs to Moscow of its military intervention. And heightened tensions between Iran, Syria, Jordan and the other Arab states resulting from the Iraq-Iran war of late 1980 hold the prospect of new opportunities to project Soviet influence in the Middle East.

More significantly, perhaps, those states of the region which in the past have been the basis of American and Chinese influence are increasingly weak or in turmoil. Pakistan now shows an inclination to accommodate to Soviet (and Arab) pressures by refusing American military assistance in the absence of a comprehensive U.S. security guarantee. Iran, formerly the key to the protection of Western interests in the Persian Gulf, is in chaos and rabidly anti-American. Other states friendly to the West--Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Turkey--are

[15] In May 1980, India signed a major arms sales agreement with the Soviet Union (see Dusko Doder, "Soviets and India Set \$1.6 Billion Arms Agreement, The Washington Post, May 29, 1980); and in July of the same year New Delhi shifted its Indochina policy in support of Soviet interests by establishing diplomatic relations with the Vietnam-installed Cambodian government of Heng Samrin. Soviet leader Brezhnev visited New Delhi in December 1980, at the time of the arrival of new Soviet aircraft deliveries, to discuss Indian reactions to the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Brezhnev, in an address to the Indian parliament, called for an agreement among the great powers not to intervene in the Persian Gulf area.

politically vulnerable and/or reluctant to permit the stationing of American forces on their soil. And the uncertain prospect for progress in the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations over the Palestinian issue promises the further erosion of American influence in the Middle East.

At the same time, Soviet access to the region is facilitated by a combination of geographical proximity to the southern provinces of the USSR and the use of bases at Massawa in Ethiopia on the Red Sea, Aden in South Yemen at the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula, and on the island of Socotra.[16] This combination of regional political instability, geographical proximity to the USSR's southern frontier, and limited American presence in an area of strategic significance because of its oil resources has been the basis for what one insightful analysis has characterized as a Soviet effort to attain a strategic "breakout in the Arc of Crisis." [17]

For East Asia, however, Moscow's policies must be designed to deal with trends that are highly unfavorable for the future of Soviet interests: an increasingly active coalition of China and Japan allied to the U.S. and the NATO states, a situation that creates the potential for a multifront and coordinated strategic challenge to the security of the USSR. That this situation has evolved substantially in reaction to past Soviet policies toward China and Japan, as well as recent initiatives in

[16] See Albert Wohlstetter, "Half-Wars and Half-Policies in the Persian Gulf," in W. Scott Thompson, ed., National Security in the 1980s: From Weakness to Strength (San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1980), pp. 139-147.

[17] William G. Hyland, "The Sino-Soviet Conflict: A Search for New Security Strategies," in Richard H. Solomon, ed., Asian Security in the 1980s (Cambridge, Mass.: Oelgeschlager, Gunn, and Hain, 1980), pp. 49-50.

Africa, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia, is not an irrelevant consideration; but the question for the future, and the issue which will shape American policies toward the region, is how Moscow intends to cope with these trends.

Current Soviet strategy toward East Asia seems designed to neutralize the military potential of this formative coalition, and then to pursue political and economic initiatives in coordination with military pressures in order to break it up. Moscow approaches this challenge with a coalition of its own based on treaty relationships with the Mongolian People's Republic, North Korea, Vietnam, Bangladesh, India, Afghanistan, South Yemen, and Ethiopia. It also has military assistance agreements with Sri Lanka and a range of other states in the Middle East and Africa.[18] Using the military capabilities on Soviet territory described earlier, and naval and air facilities in Vietnam, South Yemen, and Ethiopia, Moscow is creating a structure of bases and deployments designed to achieve four objectives: to guard the Soviet Far East against attack and to secure sea-deployed strategic missile forces in the Sea of Okhotsk and elsewhere in the Pacific; to develop a significant military threat that will inhibit initiatives by China (as against Vietnam), the U.S., Japan, and allied states; to deploy a military capability that will counter the American Seventh Fleet and U.S. bases in the Pacific; and to develop naval and air forces capable of both protecting Soviet sea and air transport and challenging the

[18]A complete listing of Soviet treaty relationships and military assistance agreements throughout the world will be found in The Military Balance, 1979-1980. The ones noted here are those most relevant to the security of Asia.

security of the sea lines of communication between the U.S. and its Asian allies, and from the Middle East/Persian Gulf to the Western Pacific.

The USSR's military capabilities now deployed in the Soviet Far East are substantial enough to deter attacks from any quarter on Russian territory. Recent increases in naval forces and ground deployments on Japan's "northern territories" seem designed to counter an American and Japanese capability to control the strategic maritime passages through which Soviet naval forces must transit to reach the open sea (or which hostile submarines must use to challenge Soviet bases and naval units in the Sea of Okhotsk).

The increasingly offensive Soviet air, naval, and theater nuclear threat to America's Pacific bases and naval presence seems designed to challenge the cohesion of the coalition sustained by U.S. military forces and allied economic strength. American strategy for the security of its Pacific allies, as with NATO, is to combine a nuclear umbrella with light deployments of conventional forces that can hold off non-nuclear attack long enough for reinforcements from the U.S. to arrive by air or sea lift. The growth in numbers and accuracy of Soviet strategic rocket forces has largely neutralized the inhibiting effect of American ICBMs and bombers that operated on the Soviet Union in the 1950s and '60s. Whatever doubts our Asian allies had in years past about the American willingness to use nuclear weapons against the Soviet Union or its allies on their behalf have now been significantly enhanced by Moscow's attainment of rough strategic parity.

If, in addition, the security of American bases and air- and sealift capabilities that constitute the reinforcement structure linking the U.S. to its allies can be threatened by a combination of Soviet theater nuclear forces and anti-air and naval capabilities, the Soviet Union will have substantially countered the defense strategy that sustains America's ties to its allies and to friendly states. And if, to carry the analysis to its conclusion, Soviet naval and air threats to the security of the sea lanes were to be combined with Moscow's establishment of control over Middle East oil supplies, the Soviet Union would have grasped the critical resource that sustains the economies of Western Europe, Japan, and--to a lesser degree--the United States.[19]

It is impossible to know if this is an accurate assessment of Moscow's strategy for countering the multifront challenge posed by the coalescence of the PRC, Japan, the U.S., and Western Europe. Not surprisingly, Soviet writings do not describe in such bald terms the USSR's strategic intentions, although Soviet officials do not shrink from asserting their right to involve themselves in all global affairs of concern to the USSR. Nor do senior military officers refrain from describing their intention to use sea power to "counter the Oceanic strategy of imperialism." [20] The assessment of intentions is always problematic, even as analysis of capabilities is relatively

[19] For a more elaborate description of the effects on the U.S. and its allies of such a development, see Walter J. Levy, "Oil and the Decline of the West," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 58, No. 5 (Summer, 1980), pp. 999-1015.

[20] See statements by Soviet Admiral Gorshkov and Foreign Minister Gromyko, as quoted in Admiral Noel Gayler, "Security Implications of the Soviet Military Presence in Asia," in Solomon, ed., Asian Security in the 1980s, pp. 54, 65.

straightforward and indicates a capacity to act if not the determination to do so.

At the least, one can say that Moscow's actions since the mid-1970s seem designed to construct a series of bilateral alliances and a related military base structure that will enable the USSR to constitute a multifront political and military challenge to the security of the PRC, to build a naval capacity to counter the U.S. Seventh fleet and its Pacific bases, and to use its capabilities for cross-border military operations to heighten Soviet influence in Africa, the Middle East and Persian Gulf, and throughout Asia. Whether this reflects a Soviet "grand design" is less significant than the fact that it demonstrates an intention to build capabilities that can be used to pursue what are seen as Soviet state interests, and a willingness to do so when opportunities or challenges arise (and when the risks of action are minimal, or the costs of inaction are great).

MOSCOW'S ASIAN AGENDA FOR THE 1980s

Perhaps the only reliable assessment of Soviet intentions toward Asia will be a post hoc evaluation of Moscow's actual use of the capabilities and relationships now being established. If our interpretation of Soviet interest in neutralizing and then breaking up the political-military coalition confronting the USSR is correct, however, we can anticipate a number of lines of initiative from Moscow in the coming decade: First, it is likely that the Soviets will continue to strengthen their military presence in the region. This should involve emphasis on further increases in both the number and quality of naval and air deployments designed to counter American and allied

military assets, as well as a strengthening of air- and sea-transport capabilities for supporting military assistance programs and interventions on behalf of regional allies.

Politically, Moscow is likely to sustain efforts to establish bilateral political alliances which will counter Chinese influence and reinforce its military base structure in Asia (which is now limited to the use of naval and air facilities in Vietnam). In particular, it seems likely that Moscow will seek to strengthen relations with North Korea and Indonesia.

There is considerable distrust in Soviet-North Korean relations, and Pyongyang has tended to "tilt" toward the Chinese side of the Sino-Soviet dispute. Yet Moscow's position in Northeast Asia would be improved substantially by closer ties to North Korea. Military and political pressures on China, Japan, and U.S. bases in the area would be significantly heightened by Soviet access to port facilities in North Korea, which are not subject to winter icing (unlike the Soviet facilities at Petropavlovsk and elsewhere in the Far East). The anticipated succession to Kim Il-song in the 1980s, and contemporary evidence of tensions between North Korean military leaders and civilian politicians over Kim's efforts to pass on political control to his son, may give Moscow opportunities for intervention in a North Korean succession struggle. Analysts of Soviet-North Korean relations have noted evidence in recent times of Soviet efforts to improve relations with Pyongyang, presumably as part of an attempt to modify North Korea's position in the Sino-Soviet rivalry.

Heightened Soviet influence in Indonesia would similarly give Moscow access to a critical geographical location astride the strategic Straits of Malacca, thus reinforcing the encirclement of China and the creation of a string of maritime and air bases which would give the USSR substantial control of the sea lanes that link the "loose Oceanic alliance" basic to the American presence in Asia. Growing Chinese influence in Southeast Asia, heightened in recent years as a consequence of closer American ties with Peking and PRC cooperation with Thailand in opposition to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, may induce Jakarta to build a closer relationship with Moscow (or at least Hanoi) as a counter to feared PRC pressures. And political instability resulting from a contested succession to President Suharto's leadership may also give Moscow opportunities for intervention in Indonesian affairs.

While thus seeking to strengthen its ability to "contain" Chinese and American influence in Asia, Moscow can also be expected to pursue a two-track, pressures-and-incentives approach to the Chinese and Japanese in an effort to constrain them without closing the door to an improvement in relations. The Soviets can anticipate a change in leadership in Peking in the 1980s, and they will hope that the costs of the Sino-Soviet feud will be seen as so great for China that a new PRC leadership will seek to lower tensions if not to significantly improve relations with the USSR.

To date, however, Moscow has been unwilling to initiate significant reductions in its military deployments along the Sino-Soviet frontier, to withdraw troops from Mongolia, or to lower its level of assistance to Vietnam, and thus establish a credible basis for improving relations

with the Chinese. But the Soviets probably take a relatively long-term view of the process of encouraging a transformation in China's foreign policy. They may assume, in part, that Peking's dealings with the U.S. will take some years to produce the kind of anti-Western reaction that will give the USSR a new opening with a successor leadership to the current group around Deng Xiaoping.

Similarly, the Soviets will probably strengthen their military deployments targeted against the Japanese, even as they calculate that Tokyo's needs for the energy and industrial resources of Siberia--timber, iron ore, coal, gas, and fish--will eventually lead the Japanese to seek closer ties with the Soviet Union. What Moscow's leaders seem unable to assess, however, is the degree to which their current military pressures on the Japanese and Chinese are actually driving Tokyo and Peking toward more coordination of foreign and defense policies with the United States. The anticipated leadership succession in the Soviet Union during the 1980s conceivably might bring to power new leaders less inclined to approach Asia in military terms than has the Brezhnev-Kosygin combination; but most students of Soviet domestic politics anticipate that the military will have heightened rather than diminished influence in a post-Brezhnev leadership. This eventuality seems all the more likely in view of the uncertain prospects for U.S.-Soviet detente and future strategic arms limitation negotiations, possible challenges to Soviet control in Eastern Europe, the on-going turmoil in the Middle East and Persian Gulf, and Moscow's concerns about the future growth of Chinese and Japanese military strength.

III. THE SOVIET ASIAN PRESENCE AND AMERICAN POLICY CHOICES

THE CHARACTER OF THE SOVIET CHALLENGE IN ASIA

The foregoing summary excursion through the postwar history of the Soviet Union's involvement in Asia has been designed to establish the context within which American policy toward the region, and toward the Soviet presence, will be cast. U.S. foreign policy tends to be formulated in a manner highly reactive to current events; and the pattern of international alignments that we have described as emerging in Asia during the 1970s has been shaped primarily by Soviet military initiatives--from the border buildup against the PRC and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in the late 1960s to the Third World interventions of the 1970s.

The present decade is likely to see the loose coalition of the U.S., its Asian treaty allies, and friendly states of the region including China evolve more in reaction to further Soviet initiatives than as a result of a strong a priori policy orientation or sense of common strategy. (If there is one country that has a clear strategic view it is China, which continues to press for a "united front" to counter Soviet "hegemony.") But to the degree that policy can be shaped to reflect the longer term challenges of an era, and in anticipation of major developments rather than in belated response to events of the moment, this analysis is designed to establish such a context as a basis for identifying our major policy choices.

The first part of this study suggests four major characteristics of the Soviet Union's current involvement in Asia which American and allied policy must take into account.

1. Soviet influence in Asia is largely military in character.

Moscow's efforts to shape events in Asia have relied most heavily on military capabilities--the deployment of troops, aircraft, and ships to the Soviet Far East, military assistance programs, and, when the risks are considered tolerable, the use of direct or proxy military action (as through Soviet support for North Korea in 1950, India in 1971, Vietnam in 1978, and the USSR's own use of force against Afghanistan in 1979).

Moscow's political influence in Asia is minimal, and largely restricted to states seeking great power support and protection as they pursue their own local objectives: India in its fear of China and feud with Pakistan; North Korea in its ambitions against the South; and Vietnam as it seeks to establish a predominant position on the Indochina Peninsula in the face of Chinese pressures. Indonesian and Malaysian fears of Chinese subversion may also give the Soviets access to Southeast Asia, if these countries find they lack other alternatives.

Moscow's economic influence in Asia is even more restricted. The raw materials of the Soviet Far East are available to the countries of the Pacific Basin from other suppliers, and Moscow cannot accelerate the development of Siberia without foreign capital and technology. As the accompanying table indicates, except for Moscow's treaty allies (India, North Korea, Vietnam, and Mongolia) trade with the Soviet Union constitutes less than 5% of the imports or exports of all the states of the region. In contrast, America is a major trading partner of ten

SOVIET AND AMERICAN TRADE WITH ASIAN COUNTRIES (1979)
 (Figures expressed as a percentage of the total imports and
 exports of the individual trading partner)

Country	SOVIET UNION		UNITED STATES	
	% of Partner's Total Imports	% of Partner's Total Exports	% of Partner's Total Imports	% of Partner's Total Exports
AUSTRALIA	0.39	3.01	21.83	12.77
BURMA	0.42	0.24	4.48	3.11
CHINA, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF	1.29 ¹	1.23 ¹	11.69 ¹	4.40 ¹
INDIA	6.13	10.71	10.01	13.48
INDONESIA	0.17	0.35	13.57	25.19
JAPAN	1.57	2.39	16.00	27.53
MALAYSIA	0.11	2.20	12.32	20.39
MONGOLIA	85.00 (two-way)		0.0	0.0
NEW ZEALAND	0.15	4.17	11.63	16.90
NORTH KOREA	45.82 (1977) ²	61.33 (1977) ²	0.0	0.0
PHILIPPINES	0.12	1.81	23.92	36.01
SINGAPORE	0.12	1.26	13.03	11.41
SOUTH KOREA	0.02	0.01	20.63	28.86 ³
TAIWAN	0.0	0.0	22.90 ³	35.00 ³
THAILAND	0.11	0.62	13.33	12.22
Vietnam	49.90 (1978) ⁴	74.63 (1978) ⁴	0.11	0.33

SOURCES: Unless otherwise noted, all figures have been computed from data in *Direction of Trade Year Book*, 1980, International Monetary Fund, Washington, D.C.

1. *China: International Trade Quarterly Review*, Fourth Quarter, 1979, CIA, ER-CIT, 80-003, May 1980, pp. 10 and 12.
2. Present State of DPRK Economy, Foreign Trade, Korean Affairs Report, No. 73, JPRS #75438, April 4, 1980, pp. 31 and 33.
3. Review of Relations with Taiwan, Statement by Richard Holbrooke before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on June 11, 1980, p. 3, Department of State, Washington, D.C.; *Industry of Free China*, Vol. 53, No. 4, p. 147, Taiwan: Economic Construction Commission, Executive Yuan.
4. National Basic Intelligence Fact Book, January 1980, CIA, GC-BIF, 79-001, pp. 210 and 133; USSR Foreign Trade in 1978, Statistical Handbook, Moscow, 1979, pp. 200, 203, 223, and 230. Dollar-Ruble Commercial exchange rate of 1.47 (1978) and 1.36 (1977) computed by A. Becker.

states who collectively account for almost 90% of total Asian GNP. Moreover, in the last few years one of the USSR's major potential trading partners in Asia, Japan, has begun to shift from balanced economic relations with China and the Soviet Union to a "tilt" toward the PRC. (See Figs. 2 and 3, pp. 53 and 54 below.)

The fact that Moscow's involvement in Asia is virtually unidimensional--that is, limited to military actions--in one sense minimizes the complexity of an American response; yet it heightens the ominous quality of the USSR's presence and limits Moscow's ability to influence events in more constructive or less threatening ways through diplomacy and trade.

2. The USSR will approach Asia in the 1980s from a position of rough strategic parity, and with increasing superiority relative to the United States and its allies in theater nuclear and conventional military forces. After well over a decade of increases in defense spending of 3-5% per year each year, the Soviet Union has now accumulated sufficient strategic weaponry to establish for itself a position of "rough parity" with the United States.[21] Concurrently, recent Soviet deployments of theater nuclear weapons to Asia evince an intention to counter American and allied forces with a limited nuclear threat (and therefore a somewhat more credible one). Growing

[21] Some analysts see this development as more ominous than the creation of a stable "balance" in U.S. and Soviet strategic forces in view of improvements in the accuracy of Soviet missiles which, in theory at least, place in jeopardy the security of America's land based strategic retaliatory force of Minuteman missiles. It should be noted, however, that approximately one third of our strategic missiles which carry well over half of the warheads targeted on the Soviet Union are carried on sea-based submarines or on bombers.

deployments of Soviet conventional ground, naval, and air forces indicate Moscow's objective of establishing countervailing challenges to the security of the sea lanes, to American and allied bases and their associated forces, and to Chinese ground forces. At the same time, Moscow's development of long-range sea- and air-transport capabilities and naval intervention forces indicates an intention to support local allies (as was illustrated in the case of military assistance to Vietnam in advance of its conflicts with Kampuchea and China in 1978 and 1979).

This altered military balance holds a number of implications for the Soviet Union's future involvement in Asian affairs. In the past, the Soviets were inhibited by the very fact of American strategic superiority. They faced the implicit, and at times explicit, threat that the U.S. would escalate local and conventional conflicts to the nuclear level where it enjoyed supremacy. But under present conditions of rough strategic parity, threats to escalate are no longer credible except in extreme cases where fundamental state interests are involved. Local and conventional force balances increasingly dominate calculations of risk in regional conflicts; and Moscow displays a determination to build a preponderance of conventional and theater nuclear forces in Asia as it already has done in Europe and the Middle East.

Analysts of Moscow's use of force in past Asian conflicts have concluded that the Soviets have been cautious and prudent in initiating military action: but when important state goals are involved and risks are seen as minimal Soviet leaders have not hesitated to use force, either directly or through the encouragement of regional allies. Indeed, the establishment of alliances or "peace and friendship" treaties

with the USSR has become a reliable harbinger of war if one draws on the experiences of Korea in 1950, India in 1971, Vietnam in 1978, and Afghanistan in 1979. This conclusion, seen in the context of Moscow's increasingly favorable military position, can only imply enhanced prospects for Soviet "coercive diplomacy" in Asia.

3. The evolution of the Soviet presence in Asia appears to fit into a global pattern of military expansion. As noted earlier, apart from the rather fruitless issue of whether there is a Soviet "grand design" or an intention to expand the influence of the USSR in Asia through aggressive interventions, there is an apparent geopolitical pattern to recent Soviet initiatives. Moscow is creating a worldwide system of regional yet mutually supporting military capabilities. A threat to the security of Middle East oil imperils Japan's economic future, just as Soviet bases in the Persian Gulf and Indochina facilitate naval and air movements from region to region.

As a result, American policy planning for Asia cannot be just regional in scope or random in character. Defense planning must take account of Soviet capabilities and initiatives in other areas of the world. It must evaluate developments at the level of Soviet strategic capabilities as well as regional force deployments, or global economic patterns as well as those unique to Asia.

Similarly, while Moscow's access and assistance to such clients as Vietnam or India may be facilitated by the parochial conflicts of these states, the effects on regional and global security of Soviet support for parties to these conflicts have been substantial. Moscow's acquisition of base rights, or the exacerbation of a refugee problem

which strains the resources and political stability of other states, already has had a significant impact on regional security. As well, Moscow's support for local proxies--most notably Cuba, East Germany, and Vietnam--has made possible actions by small regional states which have served Moscow's purposes (as well as those of Havana, Berlin, and Hanoi). Yet the initiatives of these proxies have buffered the Soviets from the possibility of direct conflict with the United States and its allies.

4. Random and extra-regional developments will significantly affect circumstances in East Asia. Whether it be the impact of the health of the American economy on Asian trading patterns, or the effect of NATO's military strength on Moscow's ability to redeploy its Europe-oriented forces to the Far East, events beyond Asia--and American policies and performance in other parts of the world--will have a significant effect on Asian affairs. Thus, America's policies for Asia must be cast in a global framework.

Similarly, random events not under Moscow's influence or control--such as a leadership crisis in South Korea, or conflict among feuding leadership factions in Afghanistan--can create circumstances that the Soviets, or their clients, will be quick to exploit in the absence of some countervailing presence. Thus, U.S. policy must take account of the possibility of random or unexpected events that others will seek to influence to their advantage.

AN AMERICAN POLICY DILEMMA: HOW TO COPE WITH THE SOVIET CHALLENGE?

Formulating an American policy response to Moscow's growing military presence in Asia immediately runs afoul of the breakdown in a national consensus on how to cope with the global Soviet challenge. In decades past, concepts like "containment" or "detente" evoked sufficient domestic political support to sustain defense budgets or make possible arms control negotiations; but the 1980s begin with neither concepts nor consensus. Must the U.S. respond to the inexorable increases in Moscow's military spending with a major effort to build up Western defenses? Is arms control a workable process for constraining a global arms race? Should the U.S. cooperate with the Soviet Union in economic and cultural affairs at a time when Moscow is assertively involving itself in the internal affairs and regional conflicts of other states from the Caribbean and Eastern Europe to Africa, the Middle East, and Indochina? Is it possible, or desirable, to negotiate an arrangement with Moscow which would stabilize the U.S.-Soviet competition in Asia? Will our efforts to strengthen Japan and China as counterweights to Soviet pressures set in motion forces which eventually will work against U.S. interests in the region by facilitating the emergence of major new competitive centers of power?

Senior American foreign affairs specialists speak of the need for a policy of managing a long-term competition with the Soviet Union--a complex process involving elements of cooperation as well as continuing geopolitical rivalry and the prospect of military confrontation. While this indeed seems an appropriate perspective on U.S.-Soviet relations, it nonetheless lacks the symbolic clarity needed to rally public support

or to build a consensus for action among contentious Congressmen or disparate allies.

As far as the Soviet presence in Asia is concerned, should we view Moscow's military buildup as a defensive response to the Sino-Soviet feud and to past decades of American military superiority? Such concepts as "offense" and "defense" break down as one explores Soviet military doctrine, which stresses an offensive capability as the basis for effective defense, the desirability of a preponderance of power over a balance, and the development of a warfighting capability in contrast to the Western conception of maintaining deterrent or retaliatory forces.

Should we view the USSR as a legitimate presence in Asian affairs, or a power to be contained and, where possible, excluded from the region? And can we promote and sustain a complex approach to the Soviets, countering Russian military capabilities while at the same time accepting Moscow's economic and political involvement in regional affairs? Apart from the previously noted limits to the Soviet Union's economic and political outreach in Asia, can economic ties be compartmentalized from their security implications when matters of energy dependence or the industrialization of the Soviet Far East (embodying unresolved territorial conflicts with China and Japan) are involved?

As is detailed below, the U.S. is in a period in which, of necessity, it must at once strengthen its military defenses and alliance relationships while sustaining efforts to negotiate with Moscow a framework for coexistence. Prospects for economic or political

cooperation should be linked to Soviet restraint in military matters at all levels of the spectrum of force--including Moscow's encouragement of proxy interventions in Third World conflicts. To be credible, however, this approach requires not only enhanced American military capabilities, but also a broad coalition of states whose interests and capabilities are sufficiently congruent to make possible coordinated responses to the global Soviet challenge.

THE PROBLEM OF AMERICAN CREDIBILITY

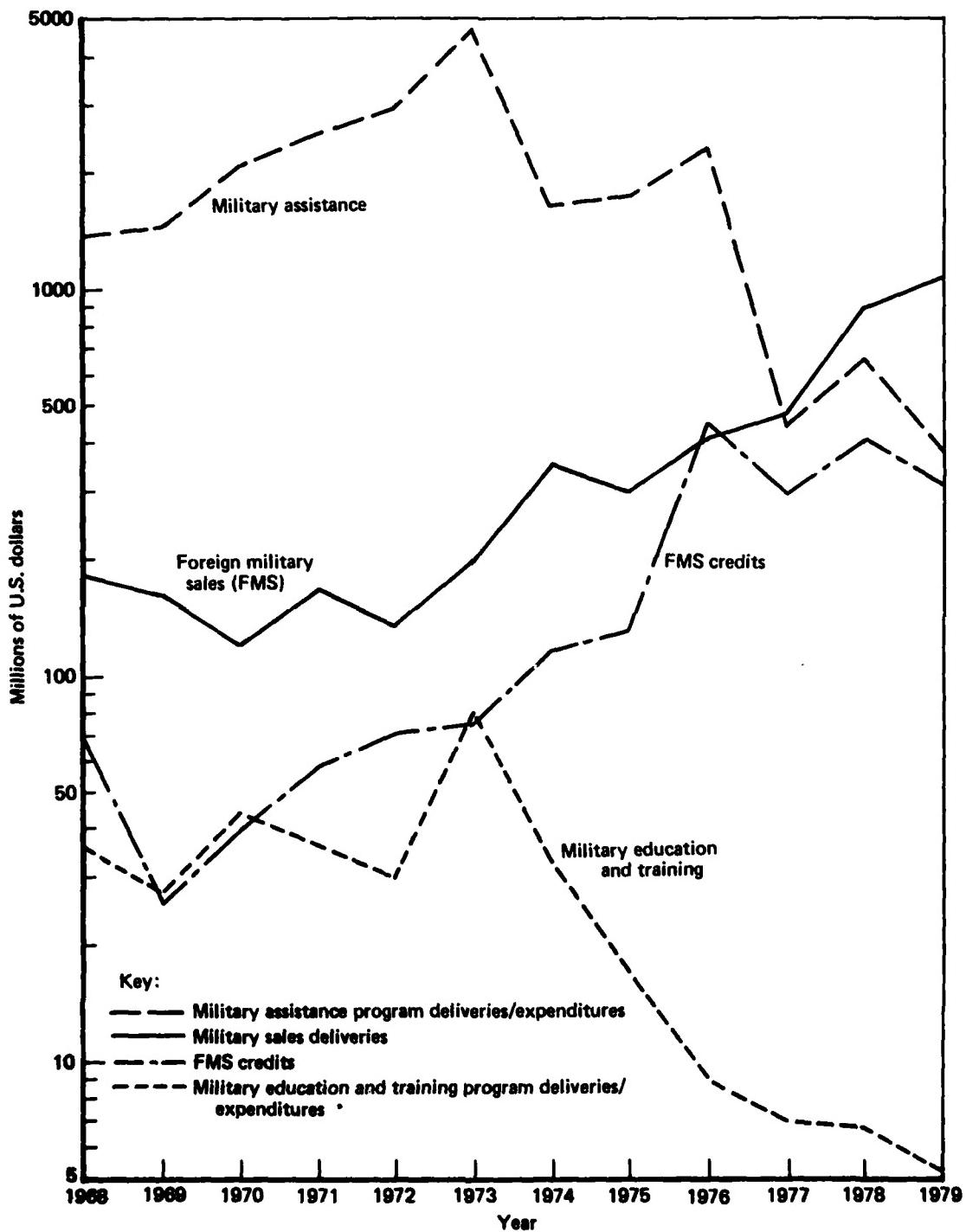
A second major problem confronting U.S. policymakers is the erosion of American credibility in matters of regional defense and political leadership. While this problem is particularly evident in current relations with our European allies, American actions in Asia in the 1970s left a legacy that could seriously erode the "loose Oceanic alliance" of relationships with treaty partners and friendly states.

Despite official statements that our Vietnam trauma is over, Asians still doubt that the U.S., in fact, is capable of acting in support of its own interests--not to mention those of its allies. The Carter administration's 1977 decision to withdraw U.S. ground forces from South Korea, and the subsequent reversal of this policy, raised questions about American judgment and the intention to remain active in Asian security affairs. The withdrawal of American support for the government of the Republic of China on Taiwan, and for the besieged Shah of Iran, raised doubts about the constancy of our support for allied governments; and the failure of the mission to rescue the American hostages in Tehran led many Asians to question whether the U.S. has the technology and the

organizational capability to conduct complex military operations--thus compounding Vietnam-era doubts about the efficacy of American military power.

In Asia, the uncertain American response to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, combined with declining regional programs of security assistance, limited sales of military equipment, and curtailed training programs for foreign military officers (see Fig. 1 below), reinforce the sense of a declining American role in security affairs. This has been compounded by the belief that, whatever American intentions, U.S. military resources are stretched thin between treaty obligations in Northeast Asia and the operational requirements of responding to the Soviet challenge and regional turmoil in Southwest Asia and the Persian Gulf.

Some Asian leaders entertain the suspicion that the U.S. is seeking to compensate for its own weaknesses by encouraging a greater regional defense role for Japan, or through a "division of labor" with the Chinese. They now appeal to the U.S. to give them a "third alternative" to choices of either accommodating to the Soviets and their proxies, or to a major Asian power such as China or Japan. Only limited recognition is given to the things the U.S. has done since the mid-1970s to strengthen its role in regional security: stabilizing access to the Philippine bases; reversing the Korean troop withdrawal; upgrading defense cooperation with Japan; completing US-PRC normalization and initiating low-level security cooperation; increasing a defense presence in the Persian Gulf which protects Asian access to energy resources; and upgrading the military capabilities of the Seventh Fleet and other



SOURCE: *Foreign Military Sales and Military Assistance Fact*, December 1977 and December 1979,
Washington D.C., Security Assistance Agency, Department of Defense.

Fig. 1 — U.S. military sales, FMS credits, military assistance, and military training program deliveries to East Asia and the Pacific, 1968-1979

forces in the Western Pacific.

These attitudes are significant for, if reinforced, they could set in motion departures from current foreign policies that would erode the presently favorable pattern of American treaty relationships and working ties with most of the states of Asia. The Japanese are in a period of serious reassessment of their defense needs. Should they conclude that the United States is not a credible guarantor of their security interests they could embark on a more independent and nationalistic course, or accommodate to growing Soviet military pressures and economic enticements. The Chinese, having turned to the U.S. for support in matters of security and economic development, could conclude that the American connection has such meager or uncertain benefits that the presently unlikely alternatives of a coalition with Japan or reconciliation with Moscow might become attractive possibilities.

Similarly, the ASEAN states--or individual members of the Association--who thus far have responded with firmness to the growing Vietnamese and Soviet military presence in Southeast Asia, could find American support so uncertain that they will seek accommodation with Hanoi if not its Soviet backer. Such departures from current policies may not occur, however, for the U.S. still has the capacity to influence the perceptions and policy choices of its allies and friends--as well as its adversaries.

TO ACCOMMODATE, RESTRICT, OR BALANCE THE SOVIET PRESENCE IN ASIA?

In developing a policy orientation toward the Soviet Union's involvement in Asia there is, in the abstract, a basic choice between

trying to limit and constrain Moscow's presence, or adopting policies which in less restrictive fashion would merely seek to balance evolving Soviet military capabilities. As one analysis has expressed it, the U.S. can either seek to conduct a policy of balance of power, or one of forming a united front against the Soviets and their allies.[22]

In formulating operational policies this choice will be less clearly posed than in this conceptual analysis, both because of the limits of American power to influence events and to shape the policies of other states, and because many specific policy choices will not be clearly "restrictive" or "balancing" in effect. In practice, except in the unlikely circumstances that the U.S. either chooses to reduce to a minimal level its involvement in regional affairs, or comes to see the Soviet presence in Asia as so benign as to be worthy of support and facilitation, the American presence in Asia is likely to have qualities of both containment and counterweight. Our basic posture toward the Soviet Union will reflect Moscow's own actions. More aggressive Soviet initiatives will provoke a "containment" mindset among American and Asian policymakers; while a renewed period of relaxed tensions and greater confidence in Moscow's intentions will encourage less restrictive policies of accommodation and "balance."

[22] Robert A. Scalapino, "Approaches to Peace and Security in Asia: The Uncertainty Surrounding American Strategic Principles," Current Scene (Hong Kong: U.S. Consulate General), Vol. XVI, Nos. 8 & 9, August-September, 1978. The author rejects a third alternative of a major reduction in U.S. forces in Asia based on the assumption that our military presence does not contribute to regional security. He does not consider the alternative of a U.S.-Soviet "deal" or condominium in matters of Asian security, presumably because of the implausibility of such an arrangement.

As a consequence, American policies should be designed to both restrain the Soviet Union's expansionist and aggressive impulses, yet to hold open the possibility of accommodation when Soviet conduct permits it. We must create the possibility of mobilizing counterpressures when Moscow's initiatives prove threatening to the interests of the U.S. and allied and friendly states, yet without anticipating Soviet actions in a way that provokes the undesired initiative and loses domestic or foreign political support.

In giving operational reality to these perspectives, we must also face the dilemma that whatever the intentions of U.S. policymakers, the Soviets have a disturbing tendency to impose their own interpretations on the purposes of others. Self-imposed restraint may be viewed as indecisiveness; or, Soviet leaders may impute hostile intentions to their competitors, and in anticipation of the actions of others take initiatives which have the effect of bringing about their worst concerns. Indeed, as we have suggested earlier, Moscow's actions in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s set in motion and compounded the coalescence of China, Japan, the U.S., and Western Europe that Soviet strategists now see as so threatening to their interests.

Much of Soviet behavior in the 1970s had the quality of a self-fulfilling prophecy, imputing intentions to act against the USSR when, in fact, the situation was far more "open" than Soviet leaders probably assumed. Minimizing such presumptive behavior, which drives the "action-reaction" cycles characteristic of the post-World War II Soviet-American competition, can only be accomplished by clear communication of American intentions to Soviet leaders, and by

sustaining coherent policy programs. But given Moscow's determination to play a "superpower" role in world affairs, the fundamental distrust underlying the U.S.-Soviet rivalry, and the uncertainties of the American policymaking process, it is doubtful that either major swings of policy or the preemptive behavior which spurs on the competition can be eliminated from the relationship.

In addition, despite the history of Soviet caution in situations that hold the risk of conflict with other major states, the U.S. has upon occasion "misled" the USSR about its own intentions to react to Soviet initiatives or to play a role in local security situations--most notably the 1949 statement by Secretary of State Acheson that Korea was beyond our Asian defense perimeter. Thus, to minimize miscalculations that could lead to a U.S.-Soviet confrontation, clarity of intention and constancy of purpose are important to the credibility of American dealings with the Soviets, in Asia as elsewhere.

Policies tending to restrict or balance the Soviets will find operational embodiment in a range of specific choices that the U.S. will confront in the 1980s:

--How substantial a military buildup should the U.S. undertake in Asia, with our own resources and through the encouragement of our allies and friends? Should we consciously seek to create a major Asian strategic front to complicate global Soviet military planning; or should we limit our defense planning in the region to the security of our traditional allies and to the maintenance of a sea-deployed American strategic retaliatory force?

--How far should we develop our relationship with the People's Republic of China? Should we rest content with having normalized political relations with Peking, and with thus having eliminated a second strategic front from American defense planning; or should we develop a coordinated defense program with the Chinese and seek to strengthen their military capabilities so as to give them greater protection against Soviet pressures and the capacity to constrain Soviet initiatives in the region?

--Should we accede to Moscow's expanded military presence in Indochina, and to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia; or should we actively build resistance against the Vietnamese in order to increase the costs to Moscow and its client of expansionist military initiatives? Or is it possible to weaken Moscow's Asian coalition by drawing the Vietnamese (as well as the Indians and North Koreans) into a more neutral international position?

--Should we encourage ASEAN to become a regional defense coalition with strengthened ties to the West; or should we rest content with backstopping with American military resources what remains largely a political association?

Choosing among these alternatives will require, in part, a clear view of American objectives in Asia, as well as a sense of strategy toward the Soviet Union. In the most general sense the U.S. is in a position of defending the status quo in Asia, for our relations with the region are basically sound and extensive. We no longer face a hostile coalition of states dominating the Asian mainland and determined to spread their influence to the island nations of the Pacific through

violent revolutions. The breakdown of the Sino-Soviet alliance and the more recent normalization of U.S.-PRC relations eliminated the major source of tension in our dealings with Asia and gave us greater access to the region. We want to preserve this access for political, commercial, and cultural purposes through strengthened ties with our traditional allies--Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Australia, and New Zealand--and stable dealings with China and commercial and cultural ties with Taiwan. We have good relations with Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, and even friendly if minimal contacts with reclusive Burma. Only Vietnam and its client states of Laos and Kampuchea, and North Korea, present problems of security and political normalization for the U.S. and its allies.

To sustain this regional involvement, however, requires maintaining a secure environment in which the strengths of our ties to the nations of Asia--in particular, our economic vitality and the access we give the states of the region to our markets, our technology, and our capital--can be fully realized. It is in this context, however, that the Soviet Asian presence, which as noted earlier is largely military in character, challenges the American inclination to limit its regional role to the realms of commerce, culture, and politics. Not only is our access contingent upon the degree of security we provide individually to our allies, but also to the collective sense of regional stability--and to security in areas beyond Asia that affect the interests of our allies, whether it be their access to Middle Eastern oil or protection from a Soviet military capability which is global in scope.

A coherent American policy program for Asia must be designed to serve the multiple and complex purposes of pursuing U.S. interests and the needs of our allies, while being flexible enough to both constrain Soviet military pressures and respond to signs of Soviet restraint. Much of the American presence in Asia will have little to do with the Soviet Union. Our economic ties to the region, in particular, must be managed effectively in a time when trade imbalances, protectionist pressures, and "North-South" economic tensions will strain otherwise productive trading relationships.

As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, American policy must be composed of three interrelated clusters of activity: U.S. defense programs designed to counter Soviet capabilities both at the strategic level and in the Asian (and Middle East) region; coalition activities of a political, economic, and military nature with allied and friendly states; and cooperative actions with the Soviet Union itself that might contribute to minimizing the disruptive impact of the U.S.-Soviet competition and building a stable balance among the states of the Asia-Pacific region.[23]

THE AMERICAN MILITARY ROLE

As noted earlier, much of America's "comparative advantage" in relations with Asia relative to the Soviet Union is the strength of our

[23] In some measure, these three areas of activity cannot be pursued simultaneously without creating serious political dilemmas. For example, heightened cooperation with China may create anxieties in smaller states of the region who fear PRC pressures; and negotiations with Moscow on matters of regional security may create fears of a U.S.-Soviet condominium that will undercut our ability to create a regional coalition.

economic, political, and cultural ties. American policy should make the most effective use of these strengths; yet in responding to Soviet involvement in the region one cannot avoid dealing with the predominantly military character of Moscow's efforts to extend its influence.

The gradual erosion of the credibility of the American military presence in Asia during the 1970s, a composite of the effects of the Vietnam experience and shifts in the global and regional U.S.-Soviet military balance discussed earlier, now threatens to undermine our links to allied and friendly states. The perception in Japan, China, and elsewhere that the Soviets have attained equivalence if not a measure of advantage in strategic weaponry, and concern that our Minuteman force is vulnerable to a Soviet first strike, enhances the view that the U.S. will be very reluctant to take risks on behalf of the security of its allies where the threat of nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union is involved. When this perception is combined with the appearance of unfavorable conventional force balances, the evident American caution about Vietnam-type involvements in the internal security of regional states (such as Pakistan and Thailand), and reluctance to be a supplier of arms, the United States comes to be seen as an uncertain guarantor of regional stability and the security of its allies.

If such perceptions are not corrected, through a strengthening of the U.S. military posture and demonstrations of American will to play an active security role, highly adverse developments could well be stimulated in the coming decade. Trends toward rearmament, including nuclear proliferation, have already been encouraged by doubts about the

American commitment to maintain an active security presence. As we see in current dealings with our European allies, such doubts--when combined with enhanced indigenous military capabilities or heightened Soviet military pressures--can readily lead to the dissolution of coordinated responses to security threats. Or, as demonstrated by Pakistan's recent reluctance to accept limited American military assistance, we may see a tendency to accommodate to real or presumed Soviet threats. And if current trends in the U.S.-Soviet military balance are not corrected through American initiatives, we could set in motion trends toward either the formation of new security coalitions (such as China and Japan), further accommodation to the Soviets (the "Finlandization" of Japan, or Sino-Soviet rapprochement), or the breakout of regional violence (such as the continuing conflicts in Indochina, or communal violence in Indonesia, Malaysia, or the Philippines). Any of these trends, either individually or in some combination, would hold the dangers of further unfavorable shifts in geopolitical patterns and/or U.S.-Soviet confrontation.

The United States faces four interrelated military tasks if it is to deal with these unfavorable trends:

1. The integrity of our strategic retaliatory forces must be reaffirmed, as presumably they will be through a combination of the M-X missile, manned strategic bomber, and Trident submarine programs. This development is fundamental to reassuring allies that the U.S. will be prepared to respond to Soviet initiatives; that our "nuclear umbrella" is credible enough to enable the U.S. to compete effectively with the Soviet Union at lower levels of the spectrum of force.

2. In view of the deployment of Soviet SS-20 IRBMs to the Far East, the U.S. must maintain sufficient theater nuclear systems of its own in Asia to neutralize Moscow's ability to threaten our bases on allied soil. The deployment of submarine-launched cruise missiles and the maintenance of nuclear-capable aircraft carriers in the Pacific will be particularly important in this regard as they establish a countervailing force to Soviet deployments but without the need for land basing of such systems. This will minimize the sense of vulnerability of our allies in maintaining other forms of security cooperation with us, while conveying a U.S. willingness to challenge Soviet military initiatives in Asia without having to escalate conflict to the level of strategic nuclear war.

3. Conventional force deployments in Asia are likely to require strengthened naval and air capabilities. Given the continuing development of the Soviet Far East Fleet, and the likelihood that conflicts in the Persian Gulf will divert assets of the Seventh Fleet from the Western Pacific, there is an evident need to increase the American naval presence in Asian waters to assure the security of sea transport lanes. Without such assurance, our ability to sustain a defense strategy for Korea and Japan based on limited "tripwire" forces which can be reinforced in time of conflict will be increasingly called into question. A third aircraft carrier assigned to the Seventh Fleet would do much to sustain security of the sea lanes; and carriers have the advantages of mobility while minimizing political sensitivities and the related complexities of land bases. Yet they are enormously expensive, and require the better part of a decade to build. However,

just a U.S. decision to build an additional carrier for the Seventh Fleet would do much to counter the current impression of an overtaxed and declining American military presence in Asia. This impression will be reinforced if, as rumored, the Soviets deploy their first aircraft carrier to Asia late in the 1980s.

4. The development of new naval basing facilities in Southeast Asia would also help to ease fears in the region that the U.S. will be unable to counter the presence of Soviet or Vietnamese forces, or is abandoning its regional security role to the play of the Sino-Soviet rivalry.

Asian air defense will become increasingly problematic in the 1980s as the Soviets deploy more long-range interceptors, reconnaissance aircraft, and airborne assault units to their Far East provinces. An effective countervailing force to Soviet air deployments will require the cooperation of allies, especially Japan and potentially China. One of the major issues the U.S. must face in regional security planning, especially in an era of constrained defense budgets, is how far to develop an integrated regional air (and naval) defense system with other states.

Similarly, if the U.S. intends to limit its ground force deployments in Asia to the current infantry division in South Korea and the marine amphibious unit and battalion landing team in Okinawa, there is a clear need to strengthen allied ground forces, as is emphasized by the threat to Southeast Asia created by the Soviet-supported Vietnamese army. Continuing cutbacks in U.S. military assistance and training programs, as well as further reductions in credits for foreign military

sales (see Fig. 1 on p. 38), must be reversed if the U.S. is to maintain effective working relations with regional allies and the strength of indigenous forces that are likely to remain the first line of defense against Soviet proxy initiatives.

The modest American responses to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Vietnamese military takeover of Cambodia emphasize that the most probable threats to regional security will involve local conflicts into which the Soviets or their clients inject themselves. In the absence of a countervailing American or allied presence, such initiatives will only be seen as relatively risk free and advantageous to the extension of Soviet influence. U.S. conventional force programs in the 1980s must establish capabilities for responding to such pressures or else allies, such as Thailand, will feel increasingly vulnerable, and U.S.-Soviet relations will become evermore strained as Moscow pursues its efforts to shape political alignments in the Third World by military means.

COALITION ACTIVITIES WITH ALLIED AND FRIENDLY STATES

There is irony in the fact that the less favorable the American military position relative to the Soviet Union, the more the U.S. requires the support of allies to compensate for its own deficiencies; yet the greater the lack of confidence in American defense capabilities, the less willing will be allies to collaborate with the U.S. because of their greater vulnerability to Soviet pressures. Thus, unless the U.S. takes measures to strengthen its own defense capabilities it is likely to find allies reluctant to cooperate in security matters at just the time that such collaboration is especially needed.

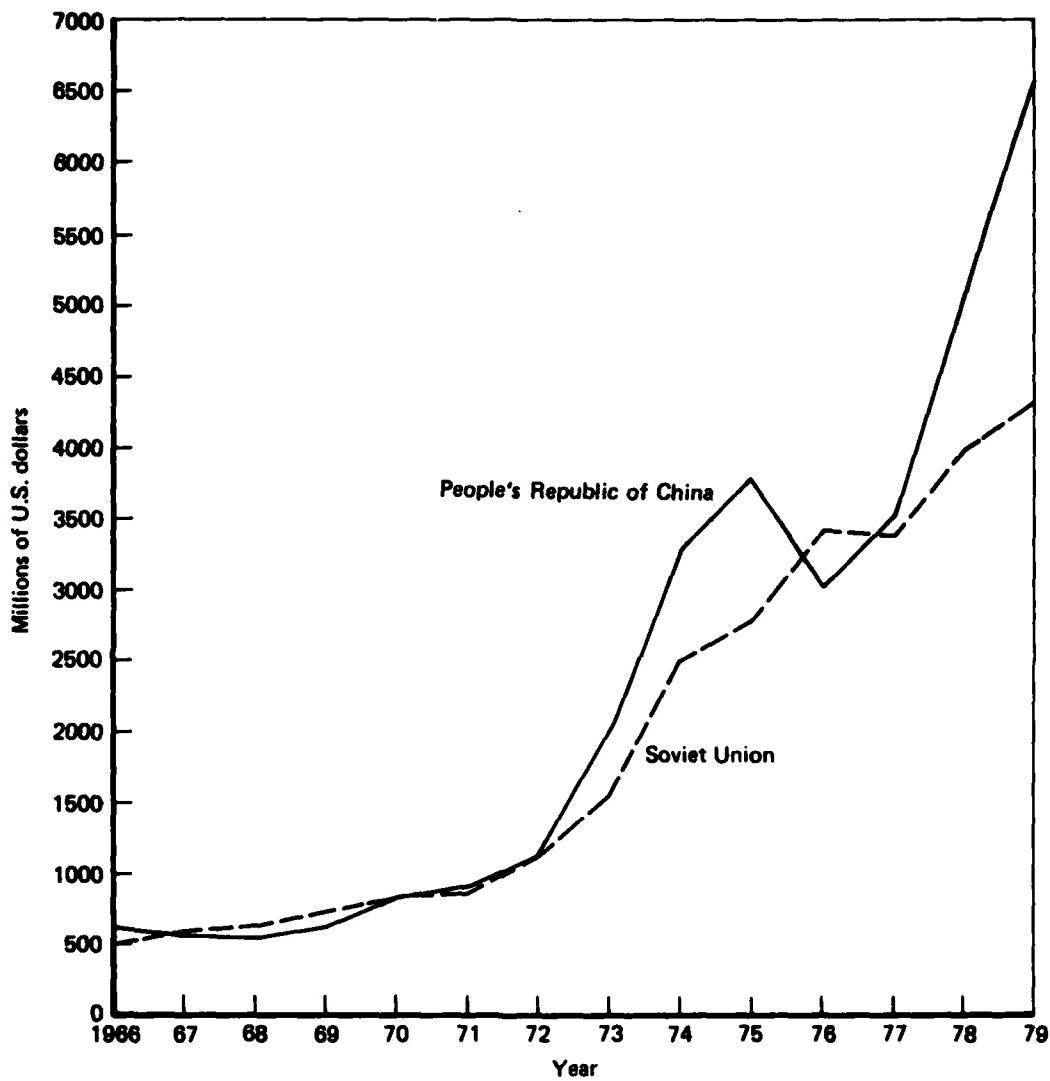
This dilemma will be compounded in the 1980s by the growing defense capabilities of states like Japan, China, and South Korea, who can strengthen their own military systems with substantial domestic scientific and industrial capabilities. Unless we skillfully manage our evolving relationships with the countries of Asia in the context of the growing Soviet military presence, we may face in a decade or so a situation of new security coalitions that could weaken American access to the region, heightened military threats resulting from the proliferation of sophisticated weaponry, and perhaps greater Soviet involvement in the region as various states look to Moscow as a counterweight to increased Chinese or Japanese military capabilities. The U.S. is now in a critical period where its own actions can shape the evolution of Asian defense relationships. The costs to us of a continuing decline in our involvement in such affairs is likely to be the loss of American influence over regional trends and the eventual emergence of geopolitical patterns that will limit our welcome.

Japan. There is broad consensus in the United States that our political, economic, and security ties to Japan are the core of America's involvement in Asia. In a period where Japan's economic strength has grown out of all proportion to her role in political and security affairs, a major question for the 1980s is how to develop the U.S.-Japan defense relationship to reflect a greater balance between the country's industrial capabilities, security concerns, and new aspirations for leadership in regional and world affairs. Continuing economic tensions between the two countries will require careful management if they are not to spill over into the realm of political

relations; and the Japanese will have to be sensitive to American concerns that they are getting a "free ride" in security matters.

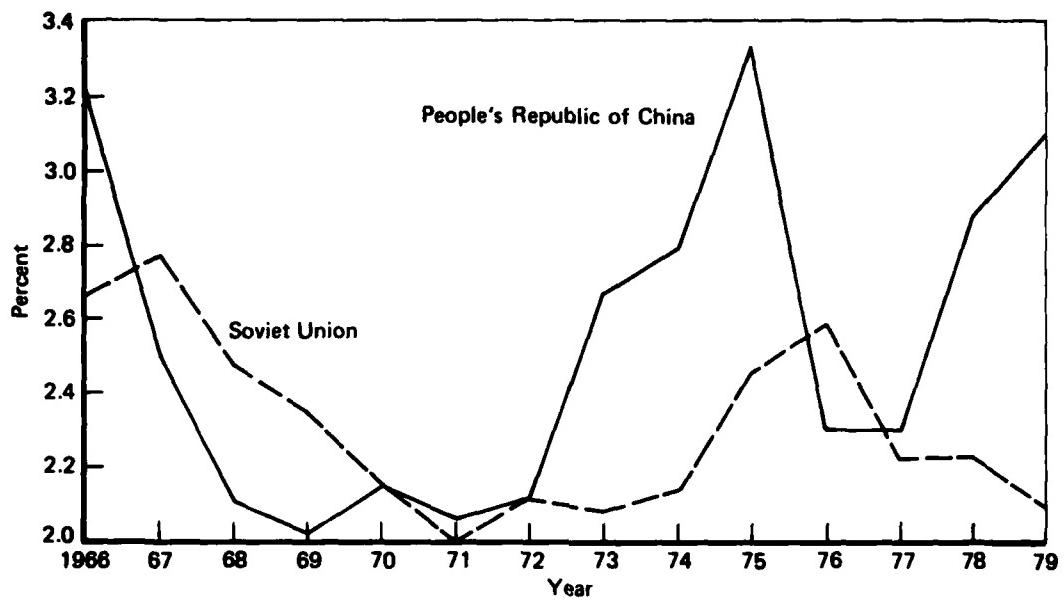
There is a clear sense among specialists that the Soviets have seriously mishandled their relations with the Japanese, adopting rigid and counterproductive policies on sensitive issues such as the "northern territory" controversy, or the development of relations with China. Moscow has made it virtually impossible for any Japanese political leader to promote balanced relations between China and the USSR. Indeed, with the recent garrisoning of the contested northern islands, the Japanese have formally identified the Soviet Union as their country's primary security problem.

As a consequence, Japanese policy--with some support from the United States--is moving away from "equidistance" between the two Communist states toward a pro-China tilt. The Sino-Japanese treaty of peace and friendship is not balanced by a treaty of good neighborly relations with the Soviet Union because of the unresolved northern territory issue. Japan's foreign trade increasingly favors the Chinese at the expense of the Soviets (see Figs. 2 and 3), a shift encouraged by the United States to the degree that American officials and private investors are reluctant to support coinvestment projects in the Soviet Far East, such as the Yakutia gas project. And while the U.S. has not encouraged Japanese contacts with China in the security field, both American and Chinese officials urge the Japanese to increase their defense spending and play a more active role in securing the home islands and their surrounding waters.



SOURCE: *Direction of Trade Yearbook, 1980, 1979, 1970-1978, and 1966-1970*, Washington D.C., International Monetary Fund.

Fig. 2 — Japan's two-way trade with People's Republic of China and Soviet Union, 1966—1979 (in millions of U.S. dollars)



SOURCE: *Direction of Trade Yearbook, 1980, 1979,*
1970-1976, and 1966-1970, Washington D.C.,
International Monetary Fund.

**Fig. 3 — Japan's trade with People's Republic of China and Soviet Union, 1966–1979,
as a percentage of Japan's total foreign trade**

This policy evolution is sustained by broad support in the U.S. and Japan for strengthening Japanese-American cooperation in security matters. After three decades of a predominant American role in implementing the Mutual Security Treaty, there is recognition that the defense relationship must be operationalized in a manner that reflects Japan's economic strength, the new public mood of acceptance of defense responsibilities, and the pressures on American military resources. A genuine partnership in defense matters based on active consultation and joint planning must be created in the 1980s with Japan assuming greater responsibilities in such areas as air defense and antisubmarine warfare. The sensitive issues in this evolution are how far Japan's defense perimeter should extend beyond the home islands (in view of lingering fears in East and Southeast Asia about Japan's past imperial ambitions), and the relative weight of efforts among the three military services, where the ground forces traditionally have exercised major political influence if not operational responsibility.

Congressional pressures for Japan to use its economic strength to carry a greater share of the defense burden of the alliance have led American officials to press Tokyo to increase its defense spending almost irrespective of the uses to which enhanced Japanese military capabilities will be put. The 1980s must see the evolution of a shared conception of security roles and missions if the Mutual Security Treaty is to remain the framework for defense cooperation between Japan and the United States. This will no doubt involve expansion of Japanese military capabilities; yet the country's economic vitality and lingering resistance to rearmament may make it productive for Japan to use

economic assistance to stabilize countries critical to the alliance such as Turkey, or to provide states such as India and Pakistan alternatives to Soviet or American aid.[24]

There is also a growing awareness that America's role in securing Japan's access to Middle East energy resources and in protecting the sea lanes through which the oil is transported will play a major role in sustaining the U.S.-Japan relationship. Should the United States fail to provide for Japan's energy security, or be unable to adjust the workings of the defense relationship to contemporary circumstances, the future could hold such ominous developments as some form of Japanese accommodation to Soviet military and economic pressures, a Sino-Japanese entente in matters of economics and defense, or Japan embarking on a more independent and nationalistic course in world affairs. In the absence of a strong and credible American role in regional affairs, our contemporary encouragement of Japanese rearmament and closer Sino-Japanese ties could stimulate trends toward new centers of power that eventually would work against American influence in Asia.

Musing about these various possibilities in the development of U.S.-Japan relations sharpens the sense of choice about policies affecting the Soviet Union in Asia. Should we encourage the Japanese to maintain balanced relations between Moscow and Peking; or should we support Japan's current move toward closer relations with China and seek to create a U.S.-PRC-Japan coalition? It is almost certainly beyond American capabilities, if not contrary to U.S. interests, to convince

[24] See Takuwa Kubo, "Security in Northeast Asia," in Solomon, ed., Asian Security in the 1980s, p. 107.

the Soviets that by being more accommodating to Japanese interests we can sustain a less threatening regional balance in Asia. Moscow's flexibility on the Northern territory issue is constrained by fears of what concessions would mean for the Soviet position in Eastern Europe or the Sino-Soviet border negotiations. And Moscow's willingness to reverse the trend toward militarization of the Far East would very likely require a comprehensive settlement of security issues involving China and Japan as well as the American defense strategy in the Western Pacific. Such a settlement is almost certainly beyond America's capacity to encourage; and negotiations with the Soviets on such fundamental issues affecting the basic interests of so many major states would convey the impression of a Soviet-American condominium if relations with our allies and friends were not handled effectively.

What then should be the American attitude toward the development of relations with Japan in the context of the Soviet presence in Asia? Our own interests will clearly be served by strengthening the security relationship and economic dealings with Japan. Such bilateral ties will not prejudice the development of balanced relations among the other major powers of the region. The degree of encouragement the U.S. might give Tokyo to develop closer ties with the Chinese or the Soviets should be a function of Soviet, or Chinese, actions. As the one power with the military resources to threaten Japanese security, Moscow must bear the burden of consequences of its policies in Asia. Continuing military pressures against the Japanese, Chinese, and the U.S. will only stimulate increased security cooperation among the three powers. In contrast, greater Soviet flexibility on such issues as the status of the

northern territories, or garrison troops on them, would provide the basis for increased cooperation. The U.S. should conduct its policies in Northeast Asia so as to hold open the possibility of such accommodation, while taking as a baseline the current reality of the Soviet presence and policies.

The U.S. does, however, have the potential for some leverage with Moscow in defining the future character of security and economic relations in the region. We could encourage with our own resources greater Japanese investment in Siberian development. And we could stimulate greater collaboration in matters of regional security between Tokyo and Peking. The problem is to convince the Soviets that they have some influence over the policies we pursue, and to develop the kind of dialogue with Peking and Tokyo which will prevent any approach to Moscow on the great issues of Asian security from being used to undermine our presently good relations with these major Asian states.

China. If there is consensus in the United States over the primacy of our relationship with Japan, there is great division of opinion on the issue of how to develop ties with the People's Republic of China. While political normalization was widely accepted, the question of whether to make our China relationship one element in a set of policies designed to cope with the global Soviet challenge, and the possibility of security cooperation with Peking, has generated considerable debate. As reflected in the controversy surrounding such media phrases as "playing the China card" and "arms sales to China," the American official community remains divided about how to promote relations with

the PRC.[25]

The arguments for and against security cooperation with China give evidence of the complexity of the issues involved in formulating a policy that will gain public and political consensus. Some argue that U.S.-PRC security cooperation, or at least its prospect, will caution or deter the Soviet Union from taking actions threatening to Chinese and American interests. Yet others say that such cooperation would be a provocation or incitement to Moscow, and undermine the possibility of future improvements in U.S.-Soviet relations. Some advocate American assistance to China as she seeks to strengthen her defenses as a way of complicating Soviet military planning and enabling the Chinese to resist pressures from Moscow. Others assert that such U.S. military assistance in the context of the great disparity in Chinese and Soviet military capabilities would only incite Moscow to take preemptive military action against the PRC.

Some argue that U.S.-PRC military cooperation will help to maintain a global and regional balance of power by securing a major state with the capacity to play an important role in Asia and, increasingly, in global affairs. Others argue, conversely, that U.S.-PRC military cooperation will undermine the prospect of creating a regional balance

[25] Recent public opinion data reveal, however, what one analyst has termed a "colossal shift of opinion in American views about the People's Republic of China." Between 1977 and 1980 American opinion shifted from a strongly unfavorable view of the PRC to a highly positive one. And where in 1977 only 11% of a national opinion sample thought the U.S. should assist "mainland China" in building up its military strength against the USSR, in 1980 47% believed we should. (See William Watts, Americans Look at Asia: A Need For Understanding [Washington: Potomac Associates, 1980], pp. 7, 51.) Despite this shift in public attitudes, the community of official and academic specialists on national security, the Soviet Union, and Asia remains strongly divided on the issue of security cooperation with the PRC.

by stimulating other states to maneuver in the context of the Sino-Soviet rivalry. States fearful of the growth of Chinese power--India, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia, or even Japan--would seek ways of countering the possibility of pressures from a strengthened Peking, perhaps by establishing closer ties with the Soviet Union.

Some argue that it will be difficult to sustain a normal U.S.-PRC relationship without a certain measure of security cooperation, inasmuch as it is China's concern with Soviet "hegemony" that has been the primary motivation behind Peking's effort to normalize relations with the U.S. Others assert that as China becomes stronger, even with American assistance, she will inevitably go her own way, that she will "double cross" the U.S. by improving relations with the Soviet Union. Some argue that political instability in Peking is so likely that the Chinese cannot be relied upon to pursue a constant foreign policy based on normal relations with the United States.

Some say that in a period where the U.S. must respond to the global Soviet challenge from a position of at least temporary vulnerability, we need all the support we can get from allies and friendly states. Conversely, others say that Peking, long committed to a policy of "self-reliance," will be reluctant to coordinate policies with the U.S.; that we should strengthen our own capabilities rather than seek unreliable relationships to compensate for our own deficiencies, and that we risk the danger of creating long-term problems by strengthening China (and Japan) in order to deal with our own short-term vulnerabilities.

What kind of a policy framework can be constructed from this welter of arguments? While no one policy could possibly reconcile all the purposes and concerns expressed above, we can at least establish a baseline for policy in the benefits to the United States of having achieved political normalization with the PRC. We no longer face a two-front strategic challenge from a China either allied to the Soviet Union or determined to work against American as well as Soviet interests in Asia. Normalization has eliminated a major strain in our dealings with Japan; and the Chinese have been supportive of American ties to NATO and our diplomacy in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, Africa, and South Asia.

Even on the sensitive issue of Taiwan, normalization has, for a time at least, defused the virulence of Peking's confrontation with the island. PRC media no longer speak of "liberating" Taiwan, and there is no evidence of Chinese efforts to build the specialized military capability needed to invade the island. PRC leaders do, however, assert the objective of "reunifying" the island with the mainland in the 1980s. A growing, if indirect, trade of more than \$200 million each year between Taiwan and mainland China gives further evidence that the island's security--under present circumstances--has not been jeopardized by normalization. And while this situation, of course, could change as a result of policy shifts in either Peking or Washington, or developments such as a Taiwanese move toward independence, or contacts with the Soviet Union, for the moment normalization has significantly reduced tensions in the Taiwan Strait.

Normalization has gained broad support in the United States and China; and the present issue is how best to sustain the benefits for both sides of the dramatic developments of the 1970s. Whatever indirect strategic advantages have accrued to the U.S. and PRC as a result of normalization will presumably be reinforced by parallel but mutually supporting foreign and security policies where Chinese and American interests converge. And within the limits of China's ability to finance trade, educational exchanges, and a range of cultural contacts, the United States is likely to make some limited contribution--along with Japan and Western Europe--to the long-term process of China's economic and social modernization.

This normal and cooperative bilateral relationship is the essential foundation upon which other forms of cooperation, as in security affairs, might grow. It is important to develop this bilateral relationship in its own right, for the flexibility it gives U.S. foreign policy, and for affirming to China's leaders that we take seriously their efforts to improve the livelihood of a quarter of mankind.

Soviet officials warn against even this degree of cooperation between the United States and China, however, pointing to their own experience as an example of how the Chinese can eventually turn against those who have helped them. It seems unlikely, however, that this argument will carry much weight with those American policymakers who are convinced of the advantages to the U.S. of a normal and friendly bilateral relationship with the PRC. To try to keep China in a dependent or backward state, as the Chinese say the Soviets tried to do in the 1950s, is to guarantee Chinese hostility and an end to a

cooperative relationship. While Chinese leaders undoubtedly have interests and objectives that are in potential conflict with American purposes in Asia, the PRC is decades away from acquiring the range of national capabilities needed to pursue what critics see as her latent imperialistic ambitions. Even if one assumes the worst about Chinese intentions, the fact remains that Peking's freedom of action will be constrained for many decades by the presence in Asia of more powerful states--the Soviet Union, Japan, and the United States.

The most divisive issue in our China policy is how to formulate a relationship with the PRC in the context of our ongoing competition with the Soviet Union and the Sino-Soviet conflict. One position would have the United States adopt a strictly "hands off" posture of non-involvement regarding actions with the Chinese of a political or security nature that impinge on Soviet interests; or, to borrow a phrase from the Chinese themselves, we should "sit on the mountain and watch the tigers fight." This attitude has been most closely associated with those who advocate a policy of "even handedness" or balance between the Soviets and Chinese, and non-involvement in the military modernization of either country.

This approach, while intended to preserve the possibility of improved relations with the Soviet Union, in practice is difficult to sustain because of the disparities in power between China and the USSR, and because the Soviets have both the capabilities and the record of initiatives to threaten American, and Chinese, interests. To say that we will avoid any consideration of our relationship with the Chinese as part of efforts to cope with the Soviet challenge is to ignore the fact

that even normalized U.S.-PRC political relations are viewed by Moscow as harmful to Soviet interests, and to assume that the U.S. is capable of dealing with the Soviet challenge with only its own resources and the cooperation of traditional allies.

A second approach, which has few if any public advocates, is based on the assumption that the U.S. is so menaced by an imminent Soviet threat that it should develop an active security relationship with Peking as part of a global political-military coalition which will contain the USSR's "hegemonic" ambitions. This position would presumably involve a forthcoming policy regarding the sale of defense-related technology and military equipment to China in an effort to strengthen the country and build a multi-front challenge to the Soviet Union.

This position finds few advocates in the U.S., in part because American capabilities are not considered so inferior to those of the USSR, and because it is viewed as dangerous to build a security relationship with China as a substitute for the strengthening of America's own defenses. It is also assumed that such an approach would be gratuitously provocative to Moscow, and might well undermine our ties to key allies such as Japan, polarize relationships in Asia, and create longer-term problems for American involvement in the region.

A third position seeks to establish a more flexible set of alternatives between the first two policies. It assumes for conceptual purposes, if not as a declared policy, that the China relationship holds certain benefits for our efforts to deal with the Soviet challenge, but that if this relationship is mismanaged through excessive manipulation

it could either provoke Moscow, degrade U.S.-PRC relations, or threaten the interests of our allies. It seeks to establish a durable bilateral relationship with the Chinese in order to maximize the previously noted indirect strategic benefits to the U.S. of political normalization. But it also attempts to establish the possibility of active collaboration with Peking in matters of national security; to communicate to Soviet leaders the message that if they threaten American and Chinese interests they will provoke a collective response. This position attempts to caution Moscow without being provocative. It seeks to give Soviet decisionmakers a sense that their actions will influence, in some measure, the pace and direction in which U.S.-PRC security cooperation evolves.

There are significant problems in implementing this reactive yet purposeful policy perspective. The Soviets, as noted earlier, may assume the worst about American purposes with the Chinese and take preemptive actions which only provoke a Sino-American response. Once security cooperation has been initiated it may be difficult to modulate the level of activity, to find an appropriate "stopping point" or a moderated form of cooperation. The Chinese may resent the fact that we are less than fully forthcoming in helping them strengthen their defenses. They may feel "used" inasmuch as our assistance to them will be a function, in some measure, of Soviet actions. And America's traditional allies, or states with whom we want to maintain friendly relations, may take actions as a result of U.S.-PRC cooperation which would upset regional security arrangements or give the Soviets access to the region they otherwise might not have.

Such a conditional and modulated approach to Sino-American security cooperation is preferable, I believe, to alternatives which are either heedless of the risks of unrestrained collaboration with the Chinese or so limited that they forgo opportunities to caution Moscow, strengthen the U.S.-China tie, and establish a stabilizing balance of relationships in Asia. Moreover, such a policy formalizes the pattern in which U.S.-PRC security cooperation has evolved during the past decade, reflecting both the constraints on such activities and the pressures for them.

There are a number of conceptual and practical issues involved in implementing a policy of conditional security cooperation with the Chinese. Conceptually, how should the two sides respond to threatening Soviet actions? Prior to Moscow's invasion of Afghanistan, contacts between Washington and Peking were largely political in nature. Sino-American actions proceeded in parallel, with a modest degree of coordination achieved through the high-level leadership dialogue initiated in 1971. The U.S. said it would be "even handed" in making decisions about sales of sensitive technologies to China and the USSR; and direct sales of military equipment were ruled out for either party. After the Afghan crisis, the Carter administration modified its policy of no sales of defense-related technology or equipment to China by permitting limited sales of dual-use technology and non-lethal military equipment such as communications gear and transport aircraft. A dialogue between senior defense officials was accelerated, and military delegations from the two sides exchanged visits.[26]

[26] See Philip Taubman, "U.S. and China Forging Close Ties; Critics Fear That Pace Is Too Swift," New York Times, December 8, 1980.

In a sense, China and the U.S. have now ascended the first low steps of a "stairway" to a fully developed security relationship. The first steps, already taken, mark the establishment of high-level official contacts for exchanges of view on political and defense issues, the creation of an institutional framework for communications--as through the exchange of military attaches, and limited sales of technology and equipment which over the mid- to long-term will modestly strengthen China's industrial base and her military infrastructure. Steps not yet taken involve the sale of advanced technologies (such as avionics), lethal but clearly defensive military hardware (such as anti-tank rockets), weaponry with an ambiguous "defensive-offensive" capability (air-to-air missiles, and short-range fighters or ground-attack aircraft), clearly offensive weapons systems (long-range fighter-bombers), and institutional measures for taking coordinated rather than just parallel actions (such as joint military staff planning).

As the reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan suggests, whether the U.S. and China take further steps will be influenced above all by Soviet actions. It will take clear evidence of a heightened and imminent Soviet threat to make higher levels of Sino-American cooperation politically acceptable in the U.S. (and probably in China as well). As former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown phrased it during a visit to Peking in early 1980, under current circumstances the U.S. and China prefer to be friends rather than formal allies. A Soviet invasion of Poland, or intervention in Iran or Pakistan, however, would very likely stimulate higher levels of Sino-American security cooperation.

Despite the effect on popular perceptions of a decade of efforts to normalize U.S.-PRC political relations, the idea of a Sino-American security relationship remains sufficiently novel that little thought has been given to the practical measures the two sides might take should they decide to collaborate more actively in response to the growing Soviet military presence in Asia. Without engaging in a highly technical analysis of specific military missions, one can point to evident areas where Chinese and American military planners would find their interests served by closer collaboration. Certain Soviet military activities relevant to SALT verification and research and development of new weapons systems are more observable from China's borders than elsewhere. From an American perspective, the Soviet divisions arrayed along the Sino-Soviet frontier could be deployed westward in the event of a military contingency in the Middle East or Europe. The Chinese could tie down these forces so that the Soviets could not "swing" them into action elsewhere, perhaps by interdicting the Trans-Siberian and BAM railroads. Similarly, the Chinese have made it evident that they want a strong NATO to make it more difficult for the Soviets to redeploy their forces in Eastern Europe and the western USSR to the Sino-Soviet frontier in the event of a military conflict with China. (For this reason, Peking has expressed strong reservations about the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction negotiations between the U.S. and its NATO allies and the Soviet Union.)

The buildup of Soviet air power in the Far East, especially at the group of air bases near Vladivostok, raises the possibility of joint U.S., Chinese, and Japanese air defense planning. Similarly, the growth

of the Soviet Far East Fleet, and Moscow's use of naval and air bases in Indochina, raises the question of whether collaborative Chinese, Japanese, and American efforts might more effectively counter the growing threat than the actions of either country alone. Soviet interventions in certain Third World countries could be more effectively resisted through joint Sino-American efforts. In short, as the Soviet military presence in Asia grows, it is likely that Washington and Peking will see common cause in countering the heightened threat to their respective security interests.

This discussion has proceeded on the assumption that Sino-Soviet tensions and Moscow's military challenge to China and the United States will increase rather than diminish in the 1980s. We should not totally rule out, however, consideration of the alternative of a diminution in Soviet-American tensions, or a reduction in Sino-Soviet hostility. American policy toward the Soviet Union, in Asia as elsewhere, should retain sufficient flexibility to be able to respond to signs of a less assertive mood in Moscow--perhaps resulting from a succession to the present leadership. And we should not assume that Sino-Soviet hostility is any more immutable than was our own decades' long confrontation with the Chinese. There have been signs in recent years of debate within the PRC leadership over whether to seek an improvement in relations with the USSR. In the abstract, a reduction in Sino-Soviet tensions would clearly serve China's interests; and Moscow has expressed the desire for such an evolution in its confrontation with the Chinese even if to date it has been unwilling or unable to offer Peking a credible inducement.

While there are substantial impediments to the reestablishment of a friendly relationship between Peking and Moscow, we should at least consider the impact on American interests of the more likely development of a reduction in Sino-Soviet hostility. It would seem, in the abstract, to be in China's interest to establish a more neutral position for herself between the United States and the Soviet Union, especially as China's defenses are modernized and give the PRC greater protection against Soviet pressures. How disturbing such a development might be for U.S. interests will be a function of whether the United States has established the basis for friendly, if not intimate, relations with the Chinese, the health of our formal alliance relationships in Asia (especially with Japan), and the state of repair of our own military forces.

America's China policy, and our approach to the Soviet presence in Asia, must thus be grounded on our own defense capabilities and on a strong bilateral relationship with the PRC. At the same time, there must be sufficient flexibility in matters of security cooperation with Peking so as to be able to caution Moscow without foreclosing the possibility of improved Soviet-American relations or being caught off balance by a presently unexpected shift in China's political alignment.

The Regional Conflicts: Korea and Indochina. Much of the Soviet Union's ability to influence events in Asia is related to the state of regional conflicts, especially in Korea and Indochina. The playing out of the Sino-Soviet rivalry in these areas is the major factor tending to polarize the region. American policy toward these interstitial conflicts must be designed to dampen down great-power rivalry by

providing a stabilizing presence that will preempt other major powers from intervening or to balance an established Soviet presence.

For three decades the Korean Peninsula has been divided in a tense but stable military confrontation between the communist North and capitalist South. While there have been periodic shifts in the relative balance of Chinese and Soviet influence in the North, and episodes of domestic political instability in the South, the military confrontation across the DMZ has been sustained in a balance reinforced by the American security commitment to the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Soviet and Chinese military assistance to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In the 1970s this stable pattern began to change as China normalized relations with the United States and South Korea's economic vitality gave the ROK new resources for managing its own defenses. American grant aid to the South Korean military ended in 1976, although the U.S. troop presence--temporarily called into question by the Carter Administration in 1977--remains.

The 1980s will probably see further alterations in the factors that have sustained the division of the Peninsula since the Korean War. A gradual "crossover" in power relationships between North and South is likely to result from the social and economic dynamism of the South and perhaps lead to an alteration in the military balance between the two Korean states. Leadership changes, already underway in Seoul and anticipated in Pyongyang, will introduce an element of unpredictability into current policies and prospects for political stability.

In anticipation of these changes, the major powers--whose interests in Northeast Asia intersect on the Peninsula--have begun to explore alternatives to the "communist-capitalist" confrontation of the past. The U.S., while now reaffirmed as a military presence in the South, fitfully considers ways of engaging the North without undercutting its ally in the South. Japan, which for decades had limited contact with both Korean states, is slowly developing official working-level contacts with the ROK and modest trade with the North. And the two major communist powers cautiously probe for new openings in both Pyongyang and Seoul.

Although Kim Il-song has long sought to maintain a certain balance in relations between China and the Soviet Union, Moscow's dealings with North Korea have never been close. Perhaps as a way of pressuring Kim, the Soviets have periodically established contacts with South Korean officials and private groups. While the Chinese have staunchly espoused Kim Il-song's cause, according him recognition as the "sole legitimate government" of Korea and supporting his call for the "independent and peaceful reunification" of the Peninsula (with perhaps more stress on the word "peaceful" than Kim would prefer), Peking's contemporary concern with Soviet interventions on the PRC's frontiers has led Chinese leaders to stress the need for stability on the Peninsula--to Kim's discomfort. While it seems unlikely that the Chinese will establish official contacts with Seoul, the recent development of a low level and indirect trade between the PRC and South Korea gives further evidence of a possible blurring of the past sharp line of confrontation on the Peninsula.

As suggested earlier in this analysis, an abstract evaluation of the Soviet Union's strategy in Asia leads to the conclusion that Moscow's interests would be served by establishing a closer relationship with North Korea. This would undercut Chinese influence and strengthen an outflanking presence in Northeast Asia that would support Soviet military deployments against China, Japan, and the U.S. Contemporary evidence indicates that the North Koreans keep the Soviets at arms length, presumably to limit Moscow's ability to intervene in their internal affairs. It seems likely, however, that the Soviets--and the Chinese--will try to influence the expected succession to Kim Il-song later in the decade. Whether either side will be successful is impossible to predict; however, in anticipation of this and other changes, both Moscow and Peking will continue to test the evolving balance on the Peninsula--including exploration of the potential for influence in the South resulting from strains in America's relations with the ROK and greater South Korean autonomy.

Given the "keystone" location of Korea at the intersection of Soviet, Chinese, Japanese, and American interests in Asia, and the destabilizing impact that Sino-Soviet maneuvering could have on the balance between North and South, it will be critical for the U.S. to maintain a credible presence on the Peninsula throughout the 1980s. Withdrawal of the American military would undermine the present balance between North and South, stimulate trends toward nuclear proliferation, and tempt various parties to engage in military and political maneuvering that could very well destroy the tense but stable confrontation across the DMZ. An uncertain American role in Korean

security would also undermine Japanese confidence in the U.S. security relationship at a time when Tokyo is accelerating its defense modernization.

America's approach to Korea in the coming decade must thus be designed to sustain close ties with its ally in the South at a time when the ROK's enhanced economic and military capabilities will further erode Seoul's past dependence on the U.S., and when the playing out of the current leadership transition will very likely create strains and greater "distance" in the relationship. At the same time, possibilities for American contact with North Korea--a potentially important new element for stabilizing relations between North and South--may further erode South Korean confidence in the relationship with the U.S. if not handled properly.

Indochina, like Korea, is a feature on the Asian political landscape where great power interests intersect. But unlike Korea, Indochina since World War II has been characterized by three decades of violence and shifting political alignments. The current chapter in the seemingly unending conflict on the Indochina Peninsula finds a unified Vietnam seeking to consolidate control over Laos and Kampuchea (Cambodia), with Peking and Hanoi--only five years ago allies in a communist victory--now locked in a bitter military confrontation. And Vietnam, which like North Korea sought for many years to balance its relations between Moscow and Peking, is increasingly dependent on Soviet military and economic assistance. The U.S., while still aloof from the new round of conflict, finds itself--irony of ironies--aligned with China in an effort to preserve the security of Thailand and prevent the

Soviet Union from establishing itself as a permanent military presence in Indochina.

While American and Chinese interests thus substantially converge regarding the Soviet presence in Southeast Asia, they differ to the degree that the Chinese seek an accommodating Vietnam and independent, friendly states in Laos and Kampuchea. And particularly for our allies and friendly states in the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a preferred outcome to the present conflict would be a balance in relations between the Chinese and the Indochina states.

Thus, American and ASEAN approaches to the current conflict in Indochina differ from that of the Chinese in the degree to which military pressures should be sustained on Vietnam and on Hanoi's expeditionary forces in Kampuchea. China seeks support for the remnant forces of the Pol Pot government along the Thai border as a way of preventing the Vietnamese from consolidating control over Kampuchea, while maintaining military pressures along the Sino-Vietnamese and Sino-Lao borders. For the U.S. and most of the ASEAN states, this policy only sustains Vietnam's dependence on the Soviet Union, gives Moscow a pretext for maintaining its use of military facilities at Danang and Cam Ranh Bay, and holds the dangers of neurgent warfare in Kampuchea destroying the ravaged Cambodians and spilling over into Thailand. Certain of the ASEAN states--Malaysia and Indonesia increasing discomfort at the growth of Chinese influence in Southeast Asia through Peking's active ties to Thailand and

American policy toward Indochina must thus maneuver between conflicting objectives and shifting relationships. We must strengthen our military presence to reassure allies and friends that we can inhibit Vietnamese and Soviet intervention and reinforce their own security. At the same time, we must preserve sufficient political flexibility to support possible trends toward a neutralization of Kampuchea or a more independent evolution in Hanoi's policies, even if such developments do not fully accord with Chinese objectives. Thus, as in Korea, the strength of the American military position in Southeast Asia is a fundamental asset for dampening down the rivalry of the great communist powers, insuring the security of our allies, and coping with the uncertainties of a fluid and conflict-laden situation. The cost of an American failure to strengthen such a presence will be the evolution of trends that will most likely bring greater violence and loss of American influence to Southeast Asia.

Our specific objectives toward the region in the 1980s must be to contain the conflict in Indochina and insure the security of Thailand, while using our military, economic, and political resources to sustain the vitality of ASEAN. This task could be seriously complicated by political instability and leadership crises in the Philippines and Indonesia. We suggested earlier that the Soviet Union, and Vietnam, may try to break up ASEAN by playing on Indonesian and Malaysian fears of Chinese influence in Southeast Asia. American diplomacy must be flexible enough to support the genuine autonomy of the Association (and its growth into a security coalition if that is stimulated by the course of events), and to counterweight Soviet and Chinese influence if their

rivalry threatens to engulf the region.

DIRECT AMERICAN DEALINGS WITH THE SOVIETS IN ASIA

A third set of policy choices for the United States in its dealings with Asia concerns direct contacts with the Soviet Union. Such areas of direct involvement are not extensive for, as noted throughout this analysis, the Soviet presence in Asia is largely military, and Moscow's actions in the region have tended to be competitive with or in opposition to American purposes. All the same, Moscow and Washington share an interest in limiting the potential for direct clashes of interest, especially where they might lead to military confrontations; and upon occasion there are opportunities for constructive political or economic initiatives which would benefit both sides.

A Soviet-American "Deal" on Asia?

In the last two decades, senior Soviet leaders, on several occasions, have privately hinted to American officials the notion of some form of "deal" on the policies of the two countries toward Asia, or they have made formal proposals that would have amounted to Soviet-American collusion on regional security matters. These tentative feelers have all implied some understanding about relations with the Chinese: a tradeoff of U.S.-Soviet "detente" for Sino-American normalization; or coordinated efforts to contain the PRC through military pressures. A similar notion was embodied in the 1969 Brezhnev proposal for an "Asian Collective Security" arrangement; a multi-national forum which would contain Chinese influence within (or outside

of) a broad coalition of regional and great powers and give the Soviet Union a context for influencing events in Asia that was not provided by its own modest political and economic (and at that time limited military) presence in the region.

The United States faces a basic dilemma in dealing with the Soviet Union on Asian matters. The USSR is unwelcome in almost all capitals of the region; yet it has the military power to intervene in local disputes where one party seeks assistance, or to directly threaten the security of even major states such as China or Japan. The U.S. cannot ignore the interests and concerns of the Soviets in Asia; yet to build a dialogue with Moscow on regional issues will erode the trust of allied and friendly states who fear Soviet influence and would recoil from the prospect of a Soviet-American condominium on regional affairs. A "Yalta"-type general settlement or great power understanding for Asia would be unworkable in a world of shifting alignments among sovereign states; and the appearance of even an attempt to establish such a superpower condominium could seriously undercut America's relations with virtually all the countries of the region. A Soviet-American "deal" is not in the cards for good reasons both practical and political.

This is not to say, however, that there cannot be direct understanding between Washington and Moscow about Asian developments. Indeed, it is probably more important than ever that the U.S. communicate clearly to Moscow its intentions in regional security matters, and its determination to strengthen a coalition of allied and friendly states in reaction to further Soviet challenges. Yet such discussions between American and Soviet officials are likely to be

limited in scope, restricted to matters of bilateral import, or involve issues where allies of two sides, or other interested parties, would have a role in formulating policy. In other words, the pattern of international relationships in Asia is most likely to be that of coalitions of states sharing common interests and coping with shared threats, not highly structured alliances or predetermined spheres of influence.

Regional Arms Control

One area of activity where Soviet and American interests do converge is efforts to limit conflict situations which could lead to a direct military confrontation between the U.S. and USSR. Asia has not been the focus of post-World War II arms control negotiations, although there have been instances of tacit rather than formal efforts to limit local arms races and maintain a stable military balance. The clearest example of such a tacit arrangement has been Korea, where both sides have exercised self-restraint in the weapons they have supplied their respective allies in order to prevent renewed warfare on the Peninsula.

There will be new opportunities for such tacit arrangements in Asia in the coming decade, above all in Korea. If, however, as suggested earlier, Moscow makes a determined effort to establish a closer relationship with Pyongyang, the supply of new weaponry--especially more advanced aircraft--would be a major vehicle for Soviet influence. South Korea, as well, is likely to seek from the U.S., or build for itself, new and more sophisticated weapons systems. If the continuing confrontation on the Korean Peninsula is to remain stable, both Moscow

and Washington will have to monitor closely the evolving military balance, if not establish some direct understanding about the arms it will, or will not, supply its respective ally.

Indochina is another area where tacit or explicit understandings about great power involvement and weapons supply arrangements could help to stabilize a local conflict. In view of Moscow's apparent objectives of developing a military presence on China's southern frontier and in establishing regional basing arrangements in Vietnam, it is unlikely that Soviet leaders will be interested in restraint; but to the degree that the U.S. becomes more active in military assistance programs for its friends and allies, or as plans for increasing regional deployments of American naval and air forces are developed, Moscow may become interested in possibilities for regional arms control arrangements.

Such opportunities are likely to be far more limited, however, than the requirements of maintaining local or regional force balances. In part this reflects the peculiarities of geography and alliance relationships. As the U.S. discovered in its exploration of Soviet-American naval limitations in the Indian Ocean, a stable balance could not be maintained in South and Southwest Asia through any conceivable arms control arrangement because the Soviet Union's Central Asian frontier provinces gave Moscow ready access to the region despite any naval limitations--which would have one sidedly restricted American and allied forces in the region.

In addition, the growth of regional arms production capabilities and the complex play of international alignments in Asia will make arms control issues in the 1980s more than just a matter for U.S.-Soviet

negotiation. Any new SALT round will probably involve Soviet concerns about Chinese (and European) strategic weapons; and the U.S. would not reach agreements with Moscow affecting the interests of its allies or friends without their involvement, in one way or another, in the negotiations. Similarly, the U.S. is unlikely to accept limitations to its own weaponry that assumed coordinated defense arrangements with other states where they did not exist--for example, with China.

In sum, arms control will remain one approach to lowering the risks of direct confrontation in the Soviet-American competition, although it will not supplant the need for the U.S. to maintain stabilizing military balances in Asia, either through its own forces or sales of equipment and assistance to regional allies and friends. At the same time, the proliferation of regional weapons production capabilities, and more complex patterns of international alignment, will make bilateral Soviet-American agreements less relevant to efforts to create stable regional force balances.

Economic Relations

The one activity in Asia for which Moscow has repeatedly sought U.S. and allied cooperation is the development of trading relations and investments of technology and capital for the exploitation of energy and natural resources in the Soviet Far East. Economic analysts note that the pace of economic growth in the Far Eastern provinces of the USSR is largely dependent on foreign capital inasmuch as Moscow has chosen to concentrate its scarce investment resources in Western Siberia and the European USSR. Moreover, if Moscow is to sustain its policy of the

1970s of accelerating Soviet economic development through importation of foreign technology, it must pay for such imports through foreign sales of the abundant but largely unexploited resources of its Asian provinces.

What would appear to be the basis for significant cooperation between the Soviet Union and industrial states such as the U.S. and Japan, however, is complicated by the pattern of Soviet control of exports and delayed return on investments, and by Moscow's presently strained political relations with Washington and Tokyo. While the Soviets cannot accelerate the exploitation of Siberia's oil, gas, timber, and mineral resources without foreign investment, once such investments are made Moscow will control the pace at which the foreign investor is compensated--despite whatever contractual arrangements have been made as a basis for the investment. And without a significantly higher level of confidence in Soviet purposes in Asia and elsewhere than exists at present, the U.S. and Japan have little incentive to give Moscow such reverse economic leverage. Moreover, there are significant opportunity costs to making such investments in the USSR as opposed to more friendly states inasmuch as many of the resources of Siberia are available elsewhere.

Investment opportunities which would increase Soviet production of oil, gas, and coal present particularly difficult choices for Washington and Tokyo. Such energy exports, at present, are the basis for Moscow paying for its imports of various Western capital goods; yet the anticipated Soviet energy deficit of the late 1980s makes it unlikely that Moscow will want to export major quantities of such energy

supplies--especially petroleum. While the Japanese, in theory, might meet 20% of their energy needs through imports of Siberian gas, there are strong disincentives to becoming energy dependent on a distrusted USSR, or investing in a resource that the Soviets might not want to export because of their domestic energy needs.

An even more complex problem, especially for the U.S., is embodied in the fact that the anticipated Soviet energy deficit may impel Moscow to intervene in the Middle East and Persian Gulf to establish control over petroleum resources. At the least it is evident that future Soviet needs to import energy supplies will put even greater demand on an already strained international oil market. Thus, in the abstract, there appears to be a clear incentive for the U.S. to facilitate Moscow's exploitation of domestic energy sources in order to reduce Soviet pressures to buy or control foreign supplies.

In practice, however, politics and public mood will significantly affect the willingness of various foreign investors to facilitate Moscow's economic development plans. While American or Japanese willingness to invest in Siberian development projects could help to improve the atmosphere of East-West relations, such events as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan or Moscow's garrisoning of Japan's northern territories undermines the political basis and the public confidence that would support such investment decisions. Thus, American willingness to facilitate Siberian economic development, or to encourage through co-investment schemes Japanese dependence on the Soviet economy, is likely to remain contingent upon the overall state of U.S.-Soviet relations.

IV. CONCLUSION

America's Asia policy cannot be exclusively a matter of dealing with the Soviet challenge; and our Soviet policy must be global in scope and based on America's own resources. Yet Asia and the Soviet challenge now intersect in a major way because of the worldwide reach of the power of the USSR, and the significance of our relations with major states such as China and Japan, and key regional allies such as the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand for efforts to respond to Moscow's growing military capabilities and interventions in third countries. Whether it be the shifting Soviet-American strategic balance, the direct interjection of Soviet military forces into Afghanistan and the garrisoning of Japan's northern islands, or proxy-supported interventions such as Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia or Cuban-led military subversions in Africa, American efforts to constrain the imperialistic impulses of the Soviet Union will require various forms of collaboration with a broad range of countries.

→ This analysis has described the efforts of the Soviet Union in the three decades since World War II to secure its Asian frontier through the establishments of bilateral alliances and regional military deployments which would counter the American presence in Asia and constrain the growth of other power centers--especially in Japan and China. The great failures of Moscow's Asian diplomacy have been the "loss" of China, an inability to establish an effective working relationship with Japan, and the expulsion from Indonesia in 1965. At the beginning of the 1980s, Moscow faces the difficult task of

countering a formative coalition of states opposed to the expansion of Soviet influence in Asia: the association of China, Japan, and the U.S., which in turn is linked to America's allies in ASEAN, ANZUS, and NATO. The Soviets have responded to this increasingly active entente with further increases in their military dispositions in Asia, and with efforts to strengthen their own coalition of supporters based on bilateral treaties with Mongolia, North Korea, Vietnam, India, and Afghanistan.

The coming decade thus holds the ominous prospect of a further polarization of alignments in Asia and increasing militarization of the confrontation as each side seeks to strengthen its position, weaken the opposing coalition, or acts in anticipation of the initiatives of its adversary. America's Asia policy thus faces the challenge of how to manage the "game" of coalition and counter-coalition without unnecessarily polarizing Asian affairs. We must develop capabilities that will countervail Moscow's growing military presence in the region, yet without compounding a cycle of action and reaction that would destroy prospects for attaining a stable regional balance.

The U.S. response to the Soviet presence in Asia must be composed of three related elements which in turn will have their place in the political, economic, and military dimensions of our bilateral relations with the various allied and friendly states of the region:

Strengthening the American military presence in the Western Pacific, and developing a more active program of military assistance to our allies, is a prerequisite to countering Soviet capabilities and sustaining regional confidence in U.S. security guarantees. Our access

to Asia for commercial, cultural, and political affairs will vary in proportion to the vitality of our regional security role. The U.S. faces a major challenge in reestablishing the credibility of our defense commitments in Asia. Failure to do so will see the economic dynamism of the region gradually translated into indigenous military capabilities and new patterns of security cooperation that might eventually exclude American influence and access.

The strength of the Soviet challenge requires an effective entente of alliance relationships and cooperative ties to friendly, if non-aligned states. In Asia our basic associations will remain with Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Australia, and New Zealand. Our support for ASEAN will become increasingly important if and as the Soviets establish themselves as a permanent military presence in Indochina. And while our economic ties to Asia will develop on a bilateral basis, the 1980s may well see maturation of the concept of a "Pacific Basin Community" as a framework for managing the strains of economic growth and trade imbalances.[27] We should remain sensitive to the potentiality of this and other forms of economic or political regionalism for strengthening a coalition of friendly states which will stabilize Asia in the face of various challenges in the 1980s and beyond.

[27]See: An Asian-Pacific Regional Economic Organization: An Exploratory Concept Paper, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, July 1979; Lawrence B. Krause and Sueo Sekiguchi, Economic Interactions in the Pacific Basin (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1980); Laurence B. Krause, "The Pacific Economy in an Interdependent World," in Kermit W. Hanson and Thomas W. Roche, eds., The United States and the Pacific Economy in the 1980s (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1980).

Our relations with China will be the dynamic--and most controversial--element in our response to Soviet initiatives. American policy toward security cooperation with the Chinese must balance between the alternatives of an indifferent attitude toward China's defenses and activities which gratuitously provoke Soviet concerns about encirclement or create threats to the interests of our allies. Washington and Peking must caution Moscow with the capability for significant collaborative responses to Soviet threats, while remaining sensitive to the concerns of states like India, Vietnam, and Indonesia, whose policies could enhance or limit Soviet access to the region.

American policy must also retain the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances in Korea, Indochina, and in South Asia. The development of normal U.S. relations with North Korea, or Vietnam, while at present neither a likely prospect nor appropriate in terms of the contemporary policies of Hanoi and Pyongyang, could eventually help to minimize the trend toward regional polarization and help stabilize what for decades have been the most immediate sources of regional instability. We should also remain alert to the possibilities of European allies such as England and France establishing stronger relations with countries such as India and Vietnam, thus minimizing the trend toward regional polarization.

Direct Soviet-American dealings will be at the margin of U.S. policy in Asia, given the predominantly military character of Moscow's presence in the region and conflicting Soviet and American foreign policy objectives. Yet Asian security issues could well become an element in arms control discussions in the 1980s--a prospect that will

require genuine American consultation with allies and friends if the appearance of a Soviet-American condominium is not to degrade confidence in our security role. And economic cooperation between the U.S. and USSR, or American facilitation of Japanese investment in the development of the Soviet Far East, must remain linked to the overall level of confidence in the Soviet-American relationship.

END